

Rashbam as Exegete
With Special Reference
to his
Commentary on the Book of Genesis

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INTRODUCTION

In Samuel ben Meir, the climactic point in the evolution of natural Biblical
exegesis in Northern France may be said to have been reached. Beginning with Mena-
chem ben Helbo, who did not leave to posterity a complete commentary, the tendency
developed to interpret Scripture by giving the simple, natural sense of a word, the
peshat, in contradistinction to the traditional Scriptural interpretation, the derash.
The real founder, however, of the North French peshatic school was Solomon ben Isaac
of Troyes, known as Rashi. But Rashi was not able to free himself completely from
the derash. Perhaps his contribution to natural exegesis may be summed up in the
discrimination he showed in choosing midrashic interpretations which were most com-
patible with the simple sense of the text, in rejecting midrashic explanations which
were irreconcilable with the natural meaning, and in his use of grammar to determine
the essence of a Scriptural passage. Although he is undoubtedly the greatest and
most influential exegete produced in Northern France, still it must be admitted that
he cannot be classified as the peshatist par excellence. His method is a kind of
conciliatory system between the extreme derash and the extreme peshat, in which he
attempts to unite the merits of both.

The finest representative of the peshatic school is Samuel ben Meir. By his keen insight and his depth of observation, by his persistent investigation and complete immersion in the text, by his insistence upon truth and accuracy, he surpasses both Rashi and Kara in ferreting out the peshatic interpretation of a Scriptural passage. He did not hesitate to put a verse in opposition, not only to the Midrash and the Aggadah, but frequently, also, to the Halacha. His most reliable criterion seemed to be his own common sense.⁹ Frequently his desire to present the peshat evoked from him comments of a rather radical nature,¹⁰ and incurred the displeasure of contemporary as well as succeeding exegetes. No less a person than Moses Mendelssohn feels that Rashbam, in his quest for natural exegesis, overreaches himself at times, and strays from the path of truth. Witness his statement: וְרַשְׁבָּם אֵינוֹ מֵהַיְיטוּת פְּשָׁט¹¹

ס. מרקא אובדמים יאמר מהראי עד שאלהבת הבסל גלאו יולס מרקבת האמת

Yet this same Rashbam was among the most pious men of his day, a rigid Orthodox Jew. To understand this seeming paradox, one must know the man himself, the stock from which he sprang, the noble antecedents who transmitted to him a heritage of scholarly achievement, the activities which occupied his time, the academic contacts which were his. His exegetical achievements and his life are inextricably bound up with each other. Each is a complement of the other. Before we delve into his exegesis, therefore, it would be advisable to present in a more or less cursory manner the details of his life's history.

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF SAMUEL BEN MEIR

The fame which Samuel ben Meir achieved as a Talmud scholar and Bible exegete seems only natural when we consider his erudite forbears and the noble family to which he belonged. We may truly term him a *tzadik ben tzadik ben tzadik*. His grandfather was none other than the distinguished and venerable Rashi, the religious head of the Jewish community of Troyes, in Champagne, and one of the most outstanding men of his age. Though Rashi was not blessed with sons, he was amply compensated in his daughters, whose offspring carried on the studies of their grandfather. The one daughter, Miriam, married a pupil of Rashi, R. Judah ben Nathan, a scholarly and highly esteemed student of the Talmud. The result of their union was a son, Yom Tob, who busied himself in the field of Talmud, although he did not attain the eminence of his cousins. His other daughter, Jochebed, was also given in marriage to a disciple of Rashi, R. Meir ben Samuel, of Rameru, whom Rashi sometimes quotes as an authority. To Jochebed and Meir were born three sons, who have often been called the "three vigorous branches of the tree of which Rashi was the trunk." They were Isaac ben Meir, surnamed Ribam, Samuel ben Meir, surnamed Rashbam, and Jacob ben Meir, surnamed Rabbeinu Tam. Although scholars are almost all agreed that the youngest of the three was Jacob, there seems to be a difference of opinion as to whether Samuel or Isaac was the eldest.

Like his father and brothers, Isaac composed Tossafot to the Talmud commentary of Rashi. Ribam's career as a scholar, however, was cut short by his untimely death. He departed this earth during the lifetime of his father, leaving behind him a family of seven children. As a student of law, as an expositor of the Aggada, and as an Hebraist and Bible commentator, Rashbam surpassed Isaac. But Rashbam, in turn, was superseded by his youngest brother, Rabbeinu Tam, as a law student. As grammarian and Bible exegete, however, Tam could not compare with Samuel. This is clearly revealed when he tries to serve as arbiter in the controversy between Menachem ben Saruk and Dunash ibn Labrat. His effort in this direction attests to the generosity of his heart rather than to his knowledge of grammar.

The date of Samuel ben Meir's birth cannot be stated with certainty. But we are in a position to approximate it because of several statements which Rashbam makes in his commentaries. He tells us on a number of occasions that he debated with Rashi on various Bible interpretations and discussed with him matters concerning Talmud and Halacha. From this we may deduce that at Rashi's death (1105), Rashbam was at least twenty or twenty-five years old. It was very possible that Rashi, who was born in 1040, could have had a grandchild at the age of forty old enough to discuss serious Talmudic problems with him. We may, therefore, establish the date of Rashbam's birth between 1080 and 1085.

Born and reared in so scholarly an environment, it is not surprising that Samuel ben Meir developed his intellectual inclinations. From his own works we learn that his teachers were his father and grandfather. Quite frequently he cites them as an authority for comments which he makes. If Rashbam sat at the feet of other masters of Hebrew learning, he failed to make mention of this fact, and we must, therefore, assume that his academic training was received in his very own home.

The boy Samuel was an apt pupil and faithfully followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, steeping himself in the study of the Bible and Talmud. While still quite young he was sufficiently well versed in the law to attempt his own explanations before Rashi. Although he respected the opinions of his grandfather, he did not hesitate to argue with him when he felt the latter had erred, particularly in Bible exegesis. That Rashi not only held his grandson to be capable of such disputations with him, but even conceded the justice of Samuel's arguments, is revealed to us in Rashbam's comment on Genesis 37:2, where Samuel tells us that Rashi admitted to him that, had he the time, he would re-write his Biblical commentaries in accordance with the peshat, which he himself advocated. Little wonder that he was regarded with such great respect in his more mature years.

But if Samuel ben Meir paralleled his grandfather in intellectuality, he also was his spiritual counterpart. The two dominant characteristics of Rashi were his modesty and his gentleness, and his grandson also possessed these same virtues. It is said

of him that he was so modest he always walked about with lowered eyes, and Mordecai ben Hillel tells us he was so absent-minded that he once climbed into a wagon loaded with cattle while travelling. ²⁶ Even his brother, Rabbenu Tam, often teased him about his modest, furtive glances. ²⁷ The gentleness of the man is apparent in his criticisms of those with whom he differed. Never did he mention the name of anyone derogatorily. His interest was in a man's interpretation, not in the man. Thus, no matter how strongly he attacked a comment, he never attacked the individual. Very frequently he refrained altogether from mentioning the author of a comment of which he thoroughly disapproved. ²⁸ This is particularly true when he clashes with Rashi. He refutes many of Rashi's statements in no uncertain terms, especially when the latter cited an opinion of the rabbis of old, but unless one is acquainted with the comment under consideration, ²⁹ it would be impossible to suspect the exegete under fire.

Rashbam's modesty, however, did not prevent him from taking an active interest in the world about him. He was a man of his time, and he was interested in his environment. ³⁰ This may be seen from the many discussions which he had with Christian exegetes concerning Biblical laws and passages misunderstood by them. ³¹ The large number of "la'asim" he renders, and his comments on certain customs and instruments of his age ³² would likewise indicate his concern with the external world.

Unfortunately, Rashbam did not leave us an autobiography. Nor were the events of his life written down for posterity by any of his disciples. We, therefore, find ourselves in the dark, when we attempt to discover the experiences he must certainly have had. Only here and there do we come across some personal reference. It is in this way we know that he had disputations with Christians, already mentioned. It seems, also, that he suffered, together with his co-religionists and relatives, from the Crusades, and once he seems to have been in a precarious situation, probably in Caen, ³³ although we do not know the exact nature of his dilemma. In one of his comments he tells us himself that he delivered a sermon in Paris, and expounded a difficult passage in the Aggadah, which was placed before him. ³⁴ On still another occasion he informs us that he explained a difficulty in the Pentateuch in a satisfactory manner

when he was in Loudun, in the province of Anjou. We may infer that Samuel ben Meir did not confine his activity to Troyes or Rameru, but preached in the different cities of Northern France.

About the only other facts we seem to have concerning Rashbam's life are that he became the head of his community after the death of both Rashi and Meir, that he received questions from scholars in Germany, and was called by the same title as
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Rashi, Rabbeinu.

The children of Rashbam are unknown to us. This much, however, is certain. He did have a daughter, Marona by name, who supervised daily the milking, so that the
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non-Jewish dairymen might not substitute milk of an unclean animal. We are also informed that the name of his grandson was R. Joseph of the city now known as Caen.
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More than this we have no knowledge of.

The date of Rashbam's death is also not known. Zunz tells us that he was still
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alive in 1153. Also according to Rabbeinu Tam, in his Responsa to R. Menachem ben Na-
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than, his brother Samuel was still living in 1153. In the Sefer Yochsin, the state-
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ment is made that Samuel ben Meir died in 1175. Rosin says that this is an error, and that the only way we can determine the date of his death is by listed events in
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his life. Rashbam was still living in 1158, according to Rosin, when Abraham ibn Ezra wrote in his introduction to his "Iggeret Shabbat," ע'כ' י"ב כ"ח כ"ל, con-
cerning Rashbam's statements, and this expression is only used in referring to an honored scholar who is living and is serving his people. Thus, according to Rosin,
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Rashbam died after 1158. Although the matter is not clarified to our complete satisfaction, the argument of Rosin does seem to merit serious consideration.

THE LITERARY BACKGROUND OF SAMUEL BEN MEIR

To understand and appreciate Rashbam's work and contribution to Jewish learning, it is helpful, perhaps necessary, to know his literary and intellectual background. One cannot read his commentaries without noticing his many references to the Bible, the Targumim, the Talmudic and later rabbinic literature, as well as his citations from contemporaneous authorities. Frequently he mentions the sources he uses by name; but quite often he merely alludes to them, either in agreement, or in disagreement, without any special mention.

That Rashbam was eminently qualified to labor in the field of Biblical exegesis is apparent from his profound knowledge of the Holy Writ. From his childhood days he steeped himself in the study of Scripture, and he became exceptionally familiar in this field. With the ease of a specialist, he quotes similar passages as parallels or proofs. Occasionally we come across an inaccuracy in a reference, but this is due, in all probability, to the inexperienced work of a copyist. But in one or two places it is quite evident that he quoted from memory, without checking up, and rendered the passage incorrectly. It cannot be said of him, however, that he was careless or took the text of the Bible lightly, for he is generally very meticulous in this respect, and often examined and compared French, German, and Spanish texts, noting their differences.

The translation literature was also well known to Samuel ben Meir, both Jewish and non-Jewish. He does not make use of the Targumim, however, to the extent that Rashi did. In his commentary on the Book of Genesis, for example, he refers specifically to the Targum but eight times. The majority of his translation references are to the Onkelos Targum to the Pentateuch. Generally he employs it as a source of authoritative interpretation, but on occasion he attacks it as false. The other Targumim he uses infrequently, i.e., Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel to the Prophets, Targum Jerushalmi, and the Palestinian Targum to the Hagiography, which he attributes to R. Joseph.

Rashbam also refers on occasion to the Vulgate, which would indicate his famil-

ilarity with this non-Jewish translation of Scripture. When he does mention the Vulgate, it is usually to refute a translation given by it. In his disputations with Christians, to which we have already alluded, he undoubtedly found a knowledge of the Vulgate both useful and necessary.

It is only natural that Samuel ben Meir should be well versed in Halachic and Aggadic literature, and a careful reading of his commentaries reveals his wide knowledge of rabbinics. Quite often he refers to the Mishnah, although he designates this source in different ways, sometimes calling it the Halacha, the Talmud, the opinion of the sages, sometimes merely naming the tractate or even omitting to specify altogether that he is drawing upon the Mishnah. Other Halachic works which he mentions are the Makilta, the Sifra, the Sifre, and the Boraitha of R. Ishmael. It is hardly necessary to add his acquaintance with and use of the Talmud Babli.

From the Aggadic literature of the Talmudic period, he quotes from the Boraitha of R. Eliezer the son of R. Jose the Galilean, and from the Seder Olam of R. Jose ben Chalafte. He refers also to the Midrashic literature of the post-Talmudic period, including among which are Bereshit Rabba, the Perakim of R. Eliezer, the Tanchuma, and the Midrash to the Book of Samuel. He mentions, too, the Shoocher Tob, or Psalm Midrash, but errs when he does so in Genesis 36:12. According to Rosin, the reference he makes does not occur in the Shoocher Tob, and Buber points out that he undoubtedly meant Lekach Tob. It is interesting to note, moreover, that Rashbam was acquainted with historical Aggada. On several occasions he quotes the Chronicle of Moses, and he refers to Josippon as an authoritative historical source.

The synagogal poets come in for mention in Rashbam's commentary. He gives recognition to Eliezer Kallir, and quotes also from the poetry of R. Simon ben Isaac of Mainz, although the name of the latter seems to have fallen out of the text.

In the field of philology, Samuel ben Meir reveals an intimacy with some of the literature which had been written. Naturally he was not fully acquainted with the brilliant writings of the Spanish grammarians and lexicographers, as he did not possess a command of Arabic. But like his grandfather, he was familiar with the achieve-

ments of Menachem ben Saruk, who was famous for his dictionary of the roots of the Hebrew language. Rashbam surpassed Menachem, in whose work there are many errors, and frequently took issue with him, although he quite often quotes him to show his agreement with the Spanish grammarian. He was also acquainted with the contributions of Dunash ibn Labrat, who criticized Menachem harshly, although fundamentally he retained the errors of the former in the matter of the formation of Hebrew roots. In his commentary, Rashbam mentions Dunash, sometimes to agree with him, sometimes to differ. In general, it may be said that Rashbam went beyond Dunash, even as he surpassed Menachem.

Perhaps the most important academic factor in the intellectual background of Samuel ben Meir was his grandfather, Rashi. From him he received his early instruction, and from him, undoubtedly, he developed the urge to pursue the peshat in Biblical exegesis. Although Rashbam surpassed his distinguished grandfather in evolving a natural exegesis, a fact which Rashi himself admitted, the very close relationship between their Biblical interpretations is so marked, that it is almost necessary to read and know Rashi to understand and appreciate his worthy grandson. In many instances, Rashbam repeats an interpretation given by Rashi, but abbreviates it so that the original statement must be read to catch the full significance of Samuel's remarks. Often we find Rashbam seemingly completing Rashi's interpretations, and at times we note definite attempts to improve upon his grandfather. Throughout Rashbam, it must be stated, there is ample evidence that he leaned quite heavily upon the opinion of the scholarly Solomon ben Isaac.

The tremendous influence of Rashi upon Samuel ben Meir was not so great, however, as to dull the latter's creative ability. Nor did the respect in which Rashi was held by his grandson prevent him from differing with the old man, or from criticizing his exegesis. Perhaps no better illustration of the divergence of opinions which these two often had can be offered than their attitude to the Aggadah. Rashi felt the text could often be interpreted only in the light of the Aggadah, whereas Rashbam almost always insisted that the explanation of a word or a phrase must be sui generis. Their

different approaches may be interestingly compared in the very opening verses of their commentaries on the Book of Genesis. Rashi begins his Pentateuchal commentary with a Midrash, quoting R. Isaac, that the Torah, which is the lawbook of Israel, should have opened with the verse, "This month shall be unto you the first of the months," which is the first commandment given to Israel. It begins with an account of Creation, however, in order to declare God's might to Israel, and to give Israel the heritage of the nations. Should the nations call Israel robbers for dispossessing them in Canaan, Israel may reply to them, "All the earth belongs to the Holy One; He created it and gave it to whom He pleased. When He willed He gave it to them, and when He willed He took it from them and gave it to us."

Rashbam, on the other hand, disregards this midrashic introduction without even a word of criticism, but tersely begins with a statement from the Talmud, to the effect that a Scriptural verse cannot be explained other than peshatically; that halakhot and derashim deduced from Scripture can only be so deduced when there is a superfluity of verses, or when there is a linguistic change, or when the peshat is so clearly stated that the derash may be derived.

It is interesting to note, however, that he leans on Rashi in his explanation of the very first words of the Bible, והיה ערב ויהי בקר, when he feels that Rashi is on solid exegetical ground. Like Rashi, he tries to prove that the text does not point out the order of creation. He uses the same terminology and the same citations from the Bible that his grandfather used, to prove that והיה ערב ויהי בקר, e.g., is in the construct state, and cannot possibly have the meaning of ויהי ערב ויהי בקר. But whereas Rashi tried to show that Scripture does not point out the order of Creation, merely to prove a pet theory of his, no doubt, that water preceded the creation of the heavens and the earth, Rashbam does so because he feels the text does not permit of such an interpretation. Without mentioning his grandfather, he tears down the theory that the waters preceded the creation of the heavens and earth. He may have speculated on the subject in conversations with Rashi, but he bluntly states that such a notion can in no wise be deduced from the text. With Rashi's midrashic proof that the waters were

created first, i.e., that the heavens P'N were composed of fire and water, על and P'N, and, therefore, water was created first, — Rashbam does not even deign to argue. The man is too rationalistic to toy with such fanciful exegesis. We never find Rashbam making this statement, אך בראשיתו לא נברא האש, which Rashi offers to Genesis 1:4.

A careful reading of Rashbam and Rashi reveals many instances in which the former not only differed with his grandfather, but criticized his interpretations with great emphasis. Quite often he stresses a contradictory remark with the phrase אין כן⁸⁶ or אין כן⁸⁷. In the light of so many differences of opinion, it is quite possible to understand why Rashi confessed to Rashbam, that had he the time, he would re-write his Pentateuchal commentaries in accordance with the peshatic principles which Samuel ben Meir followed.⁸⁸

From this brief account of the literary and intellectual background of Samuel ben Meir, it is evident that Rashbam was eminently prepared and qualified to attempt a commentary which would not displace that of his grandfather, but which would carry to fruition the peshatic tendency begun so ably by the venerable Rashi.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTER OF THE EXEGETICAL WRITINGS OF R. SAMUEL BEN MEIR

The character of Samuel ben Meir's exegetical writings can be best understood, if we appreciate the aim which motivated his Biblical commentaries. That he had a definite purpose cannot be disputed. What this purpose was he tells us specifically in one of his comments in his work on the Book of Genesis. "Those who love pure reason," says Rashbam, "should remember that the sages have said a Biblical passage must not be deprived of its original meaning. It is true that the chief aim of the Torah was to outline for us rules of religious conduct, which we discover behind the literal meaning through Aggadic and Halachic interpretation. And the ancients, moved by their piety, occupied themselves only with Midrashic exegesis as being the most important, and they failed to dwell at great length upon the literal meaning. Add to this⁸⁹ the fact that the scholars advise us not to philosophize too much upon the Scriptures." He was anxious, we can see, to preserve traditional interpretation, but it must agree with the literal sense of the text. His chief aim was to develop a natural exegesis which would yield the simple meaning of a verse or of a word. And in conformity with this objective, he strove to achieve lucidity by employing the simplest language at his command.

Throughout Rashbam's commentary we find him repeatedly emphasizing the simple interpretation of Scripture. He constantly uses expressions such as פירוש פשוט, פירוש פשוט, and פירוש פשוט, particularly when he is trying to establish the literal meaning over and against previous derashic explanations. In his comments on the Book of Genesis he uses such emphatic peshatic phrases no less than thirty-five times, sometimes repeating the expression פירוש פשוט twice in one⁹⁰ verse. Despite his insistence upon simple exegesis, it must be remarked that he never took the text lightly and never formed opinions on the basis of first impressions. With superficiality he had no patience, and it is interesting to note his irritation with those exegetes who claimed to found their interpretations upon the peshat, but who hardly scratched the surface of the text. Of these he says on one⁹¹ occasion פירוש פשוט, and in another instance he is

much stronger, saying לא יאמר איש מהאגדה שיש לה עדיפות על פני החלכה

It would seem that Rashbam's search after the peshat would lead him away from the Halacha and Halachic practises. Nothing could be further from the truth. As
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Poznanski points out, for Rashbam the peshat was necessary and important for explanatory purposes, but the Halacha was the דבר, and one must not disobey it in carrying out the precepts of the Torah. This, says Poznanski, was the greatness of the
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French school of exegesis, and in particular, of Samuel ben Meir. On many occasions, Rashbam declares that the laws and the principles of the ancient days which apply to the Scriptures are true, but he adds that they did not proceed from the simple sense of the word, but found their support in dispensable words and similar methods of in-
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stituting new laws. In other words, Rashbam has no quarrel with tradition and with Halacha. He only demands that it be understood how the Halacha was derived, and that neither Halacha nor Aggada confuse the literal meaning of Scripture. This accounts for the seeming radicalism of Samuel ben Meir, which we shall discuss in the next chapter.

In general, it may be said of his attitude to traditional interpretations, that where they coincide with his own interpretation, he adopts them, whether they be of
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Halachic or Aggadic content, as acceptable explanations. Where there is an apparent
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contradiction, he uses his own judgment. There are occasions, however, where he finds it necessary to contradict the traditional explanation, and he does so without any hesitation. In order to strengthen his opposition, he is often forced to employ the
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expression לא יאמר, as we have mentioned above. This is particularly true
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when his own interpretation makes the others dispensable. Frequently he makes his stand against traditional interpretations clearer by putting his own explanations in
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the place of or in contradistinction to the traditional. It must be added here, however, in accordance with what we have stated in the preceding paragraph, that whereas
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Rashbam openly opposes Aggadic material, he never goes directly counter to the Halacha.
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Briefly, then, we may say that Samuel ben Meir had the following objects in view in his exegesis: he wanted to harmonize his comments with the progress made by the

exegesis of his time, to simplify exegesis and investigate the inner meaning of the Scriptural text, and to preserve the traditional interpretation when it agrees with the literal sense. But there is yet another aim manifest in the writings of Rashbam, which he himself considered not as a motive for his works, but rather as a concomitant by-product of all Scriptural interpretation, namely, the defense of Judaism. Throughout the Middle Ages the Jews found their faith, as well as their bodies, attacked by their Christian neighbors. Repeated attempts were made to win them away from the faith of their fathers. Frequently they were forced to listen to conversionist sermons. At other times they were compelled to engage in public disputations with churchmen on the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity. The attempt was always made to prove that the birth of Jesus was prognosticated in the Old Testament itself. It was only natural that Jewish teachers and scholars should seize every opportunity to defend their religion, and at the same time counteract the Christian influence. Rashbam, too, availed himself of the opportunity to strengthen Judaism against attack. In his commentaries he offers remarks which are intended to serve as a shield for the Jew against Christian propaganda and against his own doubts. An interesting illustration of this characteristic of Rashbam is his comment on Genesis 49:10, where he rejects not only the Christian, but also the Jewish interpretations, which give this verse messianic implications. The passage in question reads וְיָשִׁיב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. This is taken by the Christians to mean יֵשׁוּעַ and to refer to Jesus. Rashi, too, derives a messianic interpretation, and states that this means יֵשׁוּעַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל giving יֵשׁוּעַ the force of יֵשׁוּעַ. Both versions are considered untenable by Rashbam who says simply that it refers to the king of Judah, in this case, Rehoboam, and יֵשׁוּעַ means literally Shiloh. And he adds, וְיָשִׁיב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָשִׁיב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

It is apparent, also, that Rashbam made an effort to justify the actions of Biblical characters which were hardly beyond reproach. No doubt Christian adversaries had pointed these out in trying to discredit Judaism, and Samuel ben Meir felt the need to defend them. The patriarch, Jacob, came in for much criticism, and our

exegete tries to vindicate him. For example, Rashbam says that Esau did not sell his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage, but that Jacob offered him a price for it, ¹⁰³ and that the mess of pottage merely sealed the bargain. In a later passage, he repeats the fact that the birthright was sold for a definite price, and that following the actual sale Jacob served Esau a mess of pottage to close the transaction, pointing out that this was customary. The passage וַיִּשְׂאֵם אֶת הַבְּרִית, ¹⁰⁴ he interprets וַיִּשְׂאֵם אֶת הַבְּרִית, ¹⁰⁵ giving it the force of a declarative statement rather than an interrogation, which it is. The only conclusion we can possibly draw from this is that Rashbam is trying to mitigate Jacob's falsehood. Again, commenting on Esau's statement, וַיִּשְׂאֵם אֶת הַבְּרִית, ¹⁰⁶ he interprets the verse in such a way as to remove the connotation of deception from the word וַיִּשְׂאֵם. ¹⁰⁷ Sometimes it seems as if Rashbam unnecessarily went out of his way to justify the action of a Biblical personality. When the three angels visited Lot, the latter invited them to spend the night with him, but when they arrived at Abraham's tent, the patriarch only asked them to eat and then continue their journey. Seemingly Lot is the more gracious host of the two. But no, says Rashbam, the angels visited Lot towards evening, and the invitation to stay over night was to be expected, whereas they met Abraham in the morning, when it is customary only to proffer food, and not a night's lodging. Sarah, too, must be defended from slander. She was not eavesdropping during Abraham's conversation with the messengers of God. Her door was directly behind the seat of the ¹⁰⁸ angel who was talking, and she, therefore, heard what he was saying.

The aims of Samuel ben Meir, we have seen, are quite clear. Obvious, too, are a number of rules which he deduces from his careful attention to the Biblical text, and which he lays down for the student of exegesis. Some of these are of a philological character, and some are purely exegetical. For example, he declares that similar sounding Hebrew and Aramaic roots are not to be compared and identified without a ¹⁰⁹ careful examination. In spite of this, it must be noted that he himself often draws ¹¹⁰ on Aramaic to support his Hebrew, modern as well as Biblical. ¹¹¹ Another rule which

later

Rashbam follows is to explain obscure words or passages from the text. He sometimes makes this clearer by using the term ¹¹² לְאַחֲרָיו. Rashbam also took notice of the numerous expressions which recur time and again in the Bible, and he lays down definite rules for deriving their meaning. Thus he tells us that when the term אֵת is used, ¹¹³ it signifies "immediately after the preceding event." It is in this light that we understand the phrase וְאֵת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ, in Genesis 22:1. אֵת here means, after Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech and his progeny, God was angry with Abraham because he should not have made this covenant, and therefore, וְאֵת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֵת, "God tried Abraham." The oft recurring expression בְּיָמֵי is to be interpreted in the light of a certain event to which it refers. In Genesis 21:22 בְּיָמֵי means the time when Isaac was born to Sarah, which impressed upon Abimelech the miracles which God had wrought in Abraham's behalf and inspired him to seek a covenant with the patriarch. Interesting is Rashbam's comment on עַד הַיּוֹם, which he says means up to the period in which the author lived. Thus in Genesis 19:37 ¹¹⁴ it refers to Moses. The word עַד is often repeated in the Bible, עַד הַיּוֹם. This he explains by telling us that Scripture frequently repeats עַד. The word עַד, which is used very much, also comes in for his consideration. Every time something new ¹¹⁵ is introduced, it is customary for Scripture to use עַד. When Jacob discovers the morning after his wedding night that his wife is Leah, and not Rachel, the text reads וְעַד הַיּוֹם, for he had been under the impression that Rachel had been with ¹¹⁶ him. Rashbam points out, also, that women are identified by their oldest brother. ¹¹⁷ Thus Scripture reads וְעַד הַיּוֹם, ¹¹⁸ and וְעַד הַיּוֹם. Nebaioth was the oldest brother of Mahalath, and Lotan was the oldest brother of Timna, according to Sammel. When two sons and a daughter are mentioned in one verse, however, the sister is identified by both brothers. This accounts for the phrase וְעַד הַיּוֹם ¹¹⁹ וְעַד הַיּוֹם.

Rashbam also considered accents joining or separating words of special significance. This is seen in his interpretation of וְעַד הַיּוֹם, ¹²⁰ which he says means: "If they have acted thus, then I shall wrought extermination." He precedes this

comment with the statement that the mark between the words is to separate them.

It is not surprising to find Rashbam laying little emphasis on subordinate
 121 122
 things like a letter more or less, or the significance of a proper name. He tells
 us quite frankly in his comment on Genesis 36:39, "I don't concern myself very much
 with proper names in seeking the peshat."

In the opening chapter of his commentary on Genesis, Rashbam lays down an inter-
 esting rule, to which he refers again and again, namely, that Scripture frequently
 sets down and explains a word or a phrase which is seemingly unnecessary, in order to
 123
 elucidate it when it appears later in the text. For example, in Genesis 9:18 ph ee
הַיָּם וְהַבְּהֵמָה וְהַחַי וְהָרֶמֶשׂ הָאֲרָצִית וְהָעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם. the phrase וְהַבְּהֵמָה וְהַחַי וְהָרֶמֶשׂ הָאֲרָצִית is not needed. But it is
 set down at this point to elucidate Genesis 9:25, where it is stated וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁחַד נֹחַ
 Had Scripture not told us who Canaan was, we would not understand why Noah cursed him.
 Similarly, Moses placed the entire section describing the Creation which occurred during
 the first six days, in order to make clear that which God said when He gave Israel the
 Torah: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.....for in six days the Lord
 made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh
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 day." This, likewise, is what is meant in Genesis 1:31 by, "And it was evening, and
 it was morning, the sixth day." This was the sixth day on which God completed every-
 thing to which Exodus 20:11 refers. Thus, says Rashbam, Moses, by this preceding
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 chapter on the Creation, verified God's word which appears later in Exodus 20.

Another comment which is in accordance with this rule is Genesis 24:1. The text
 reads וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם שְׂפָדָא. Rashbam tells us that this statement is made in order
 to clarify Genesis 24:35, where Eliezer says וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם שְׂפָדָא, in order
 to show that Abraham did not send his steward to secure a wife for Isaac from his
 family, because of a paucity of women in Canaan, or because the Canaanites did not
 want to intermarry with him. For Abraham was blessed with everything, and people like
 to marry wealth. But Abraham wanted his son to marry in his family. Example upon
 example could be heaped up to illustrate this rule of exegesis which Rashbam laid
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 down.

A word should be said about the form of Rashbam's writings. The form he employs is to be expected in the light of his objectives. He makes use of interpretation, which he considers, as a commentator, of paramount importance, and of translation of individual expressions into his native tongue, old French. It is interesting to note, however, that he did not resort to translation as much as did his grandfather. In the Book of Genesis, for example, he gives French parallels but seventeen times. ¹²⁷

His style is also a natural corollary of his aims. It is simple, clear, and devoid of ornament. His Hebrew, for the most part, is classical, which is not at all to be wondered at in the light of his familiarity with Scripture and his Biblical scholarship. In his Biblical commentaries he is extremely concise and pointed. There is an interesting story which relates that Rashi had begun a Talmudic commentary, but could not finish it, due to illness. Samuel ben Meir completed it for his grandfather, but it was so wordy that Rashi, when he got well, weighed the leaves on which Samuel had written and said: "If thou hadst commented on the whole Talmud after this fashion, thy commentary would have been as heavy as a chariot." ¹²⁸ Rashi could criticize Rashbam's Talmudic commentaries for their prolixity, but he could hardly have made a similar observation concerning the latter's Pentateuch commentary, for Rashbam outstripped even the terse Rashi in conciseness in his Biblical exegesis. ¹²⁹ Quite often he achieved this conciseness by merely using a proverb with telling force, by using Scriptural ¹³⁰ quotations, ¹³¹ by merely inserting one or more words in the quoted Scriptural text, or ¹³² by interchanging words from Scripture with simple expressions. ¹³³

We have already remarked on the general tone of Rashbam's writings. He is gentle ¹³⁴ and mild, although he does not hesitate to censure error, nor does he refrain from ¹³⁵ criticizing even his revered and beloved grandfather. But it is characteristic of him to omit the name of the exegete he criticizes, for his intention was not to speak ¹³⁶ derogatorily of the man, but rather to correct his errors. On the other hand, he expresses unbounded joy when others find the correct interpretation. This is clearly ¹³⁷ shown when he quotes from R. Joseph Kara. Yet, in one respect, Rashbam differs from Rashi and Joseph Kara, too. The latter quite often admitted that they were unable to ¹³⁸

render an interpretation because they did not know it. Rashbam, however, never says
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that he does not know an interpretation. To these interpretations, of which Samuel
ben Meir felt so certain, we now turn our attention, to discover his viewpoints on
such important subjects as God, angelology, miracles, etc.

CHAPTER IV

ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES

The writings of Samuel ben Meir do not contain a systematic presentation of his points of view on God, angelology, miracles, Biblical morality, and so on. This is natural in the work of an exegete, for the Bible commentator, as a general rule, follows the order of Scripture and sets down his interpretations only when the Scriptural verse demands his attention. From a careful reading of his exegesis we are able, however, to arrive at definite conclusions regarding Rashbam's attitudes to certain questions and his approaches to certain problems.

When we stop to consider that Samuel ben Meir's secular knowledge was rather limited, that he was not acquainted with the most advanced thought of the Spanish school, that he lived in a Jewish environment famous for its piety and rigid orthodoxy, and that the non-Jewish world with which he came in contact was culturally retrogressive and was dominated by superstition rather than by a rational outlook, we are not surprised to find that his was a firm, traditional belief, and that his theology is a simple, non-interpretive, Biblical faith. Yet, because of the peshatic urge, which was so strong in him, his belief is bound up with a sensible interpretation.

His God-concept helps illustrate his firm traditional theological outlook. His is a spiritual and omniscient God, revealed so clearly in the words of Scripture that he can entertain no doubts in this matter. Rashbam's spiritual conception of God is shown in one of his comments in the very opening chapter of the Book of Genesis. Scripture represents God as saying, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." ¹⁴⁰ לנפשו, he says, means in the image of His angels, and לנפשו refers to wisdom, to the intellectual capabilities of man. The next verse of Scripture at first glance seems to contradict this interpretation, reading, "And God created man in his image, in the image of God created He him." ¹⁴¹ But Rashbam emphasizes the fact that לנפשו does not refer to God, but to man. In other words, "God created man in his (man's) image," i.e., the image assigned to man, which was the image of the angels. Thus, at the outset of Samuel ben Meir's commentary, he strives to remove the possibility of interpreting Biblical references to God in an anthropomorphic way.

In this respect he goes beyond Rashi as can be seen from the latter's comment on this very same verse. Rashi interprets ~~פסוק פס' 2~~ as meaning "the form of the image of His creator."

*McCarroll for Rashi as Rashbam takes him to be
"much nearer to understanding & discern"*

Again, lest one imagine that God actually stalked through the Garden of Eden, Rashbam tells us that God did not walk through the garden, but His voice went through
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the place.

In a number of places, Scripture represents God appearing to certain individuals and even speaking with them. Peshatist that he was, Rashbam could not believe that these verses meant that the Creator, as a physical personality, revealed Himself to humans and spoke with them as one man would with another. He tries to explain this anthropomorphic notion away by emphasizing repeatedly that God speaks, but only through an agent. Thus, when the Bible tells us that the Lord appeared unto Abraham
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by the terebinths of Mamre, Rashbam asks how this is possible. He answers his own query by saying that three angels visited him, as the immediately following verse informs us. And our commentator adds that on many occasions when angels are employed to deliver a divine message, Scripture alludes to them as if they were God Himself. In line with this reasoning, his comment on Genesis 18:13 is pertinent. The text reads, "And God said," and Rashbam tells us that this refers to the greatest of the three angels who had called upon Abraham. When Abraham is entreating God to save the
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doomed cities and exclaims, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?" he is obviously addressing himself to God, but Rashbam would have us understand that the patriarch is directing his remarks to God's angel, and not to God. Interesting, too, is his comment on Genesis 18:16, where it is stated that the angels left Abraham to go to Sodom. A less meticulous student of Scripture would assume that all three went on their way. But not Samuel ben Meir. Only two of them went to Sodom, according to our exegete, for we read in Genesis 19:1, "And the two angels came to Sodom at even." The greatest of the three remained and talked with Abraham, and this one is meant when Scripture says, "And the Lord said: 'Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am
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doing,'" and "The men turned from thence and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood

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yet before the Lord."

God's omniscience is not questioned for a moment by Sammel ben Meir. In the mind of the cursory reader of Scripture, there may arise some doubt, because the Bible sometimes uses phraseology which would indicate that God is not all-knowing. For example, when God speaks in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac: "Now I know that Thou art God fearing," it would seem that He was not conscious of this fact and was being appraised of something new. Rashbam explains that this statement does not indicate an increase of the knowledge of God, but signifies, "Now I see it as a fact and as such it has become known to all the world that Thou art God fearing." Another illustration of Rashbam's belief in God's omniscience is afforded in another comment on a verse in Genesis. When the Lord appears unto Isaac and says to him, "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of," it may surprise us, because Isaac has not even intimated that he intended to journey to Egypt. But Rashbam informs us that this revelation was made to the patriarch because God knew that Isaac planned to do so.

Again and again we come across references which throw more light on Rashbam's God-conception. Commenting on the phrase, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good," Rashbam says that the Eternal reviewed all His creation to see if any changes were necessary, but they were all perfect, thus emphasizing God's infallibility. The Lord is perfect, and His creation is perfect. He indicates God's providence when he interprets "And God blessed the seventh day," by telling us that when the Sabbath arrived, the Holy One had already created all the needs and requirements of his creatures, and the Sabbath was found to be blessed with all things good. When Scripture represents Sarah as saying, "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should give children suck," Rashbam employs the verse to describe God's greatness. He interprets Sarah's statement thus: "Let all who hear this know and understand who is this God who told Abraham that he would have a son from Sarah, for Sarah suckled children in her old age and after Abraham had grown old; for there is none great like God."

Closely related to Samuel ben Meir's God-concept is his conception of angels. From his writings we do not glean the results of a careful investigation into the problems which angelology arouses. He tells us little or nothing about the spiritual nature of angels, their self-sufficiency, their immutability, etc. This is not an oversight on Rashbam's part, but is rather an indication of the man's intellectual honesty. He was not sufficiently well-versed in this field to venture weighty opinions or convictions. Although he could have learned on the Midrash for some assistance, he had no desire to create new difficulties by accepting the fantastic assumptions which appear in it.

Still, Rashbam does afford us some basis for ascribing to him certain attitudes toward angels. There can be no doubt that he believed in the existence of these supernatural creatures. In his comment on Genesis 1:26 he interprets "our image" to mean "the image of the angels." The intelligence which God is about to implant in the human mind he identifies as the same intelligence which the angels possess. Evidently Rashbam would have liked more information from Scripture itself concerning these heavenly beings, for he tells us that we should not be surprised that Moses did not give us a description in the first chapter of Genesis of the angels, for he was setting down only those things which we see in the world and which were mentioned in the Ten Commandments.

According to Rashbam, angels execute God's orders on earth, and they often assume the guise of men in carrying out the divine mission. Thus, he accepts without question the Biblical account of the visit the three angels, dressed as men, paid to Abraham. That angels were God's emissaries of destruction to Sodom he does not doubt. When Abraham was withheld from sacrificing Isaac and discovered a ram caught in the thicket, Rashbam believed an angel had prepared it for the patriarch.

Although Samuel ben Meir made no attempt to give a detailed discussion of the nature of angels, he does let us know that he feels they possessed a mentality superior to that of humans -- a sort of supernatural intelligence. When the angels inquire of Abraham, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" Rashbam remarks that they knew where she was.

They asked the question, however, as this is the way conversations are started.

It is likewise evident that our commentator believed in ministering angels who act in a protective capacity. Just previous to Jacob's encounter with Esau, when the former is returning to the land of his father, Scripture tells us that "the angels of God met him." Rashbam adds but one word to the text in his comment: "to guard him." Yet it is interesting to note that he was not as naive as Rashi, who says that "The angels who minister in the land of Israel came to meet him in order to escort him into the Holy Land." Rashi seemingly believed that one set of angels worked within the boundaries of Palestine, and another group outside of Palestine.

Rashbam's attitude towards prophecy is interesting. He accepts the Biblical definition of the true prophet, namely, one who predicts events that come to pass. At least, we must infer this, as he offers no comment contradicting the verse which thus describes the true prophet. Yet he also takes the word prophet to mean a spokesman, or confidant, of God. It is in this light that he calls Abraham a prophet. When Scripture reports God as saying to Abimelech, "Now therefore restore the man's (Abraham's) wife; for he is a prophet," Rashbam says that God means to say, "He is close to me and gives utterance to my words; I love his words and I hearken to his prayer." That he believes God speaks through a prophet is also seen when Rashbam interprets the phrase, "And God spoke to her (Rebekah)," as meaning "through a prophet." His interpretation of the phrase 'a-nu eza' is in keeping with that of modern scholars. When Scripture states that Rebekah "went to inquire of the Lord," she really went to seek advice from the prophets who lived in her time, according to Rashbam.

We have already remarked that Samuel ben Meir was influenced by the period and the environment in which he lived. This is clearly shown in his reaction to the many miracles related in the Bible. He is not perplexed by them, but accepts them without hesitation. Samuel ben Meir does not doubt that Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah so late in their lives. To him it is factual and merely proves God's greatness. Abimelech's proffer of friendship he considers the direct result of the miracles which God wrought in Abraham's behalf, of which Abimelech was cognizant. The appearance of

the ram when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac he also accepts as a miracle accom-
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 plished through the activity of an angel, sent by God, of course. The remarkable
 circumstances under which Eliezer encountered Rebekah was nothing short of a miracle,
 to which Samuel ben Meir attests when he comments on the verse in which the servant
 168
 reports the events of his journey to Isaac. Even the paternal blessing which Jacob
 received from Isaac is taken by Rashbam to be another miraculous manifestation in the
 patriarch's behalf, for had Esau returned a moment sooner, Jacob would not have been
 169
 blessed.

Rashbam's attitude toward superstition and magic is another illustration of the
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 influence of his environment upon him. Commenting on the phrase וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים in
 the first chapter of Genesis, he says that God created וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים
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וַיִּבְרָא together with the smaller fish. Here we see that Rashbam believed in such
 superstitious notions as the fable of the Leviathan. Peshatist that he was, he evi-
 dently felt that Isaiah 27:1 and Job 40:25 could only be explained one way — literal-
 ly. It is interesting to note that Rashi's comment is much more peshatic, and much
 more acceptable. He simply explains וַיִּבְרָא to mean וַיִּבְרָא וַיִּבְרָא, and
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 adds that according to the Aggadah, it means the Leviathan and its consort. From Rashi's
 comment we cannot tell whether he believed the Aggadah. Possibly he did. But this
 much is clear, —he rejects a superstitious Aggadic interpretation of וַיִּבְרָא as
 found in our text, whereas Rashbam does not. Our commentator also believed the super-
 stitious notion that death was the penalty for gazing upon the countenance of the Lord.
 He tells us that Lot was ordered not to look back lest he see the angels and the work
 they were doing. As the angels were doing God's work, this would be tantamount to
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 looking upon God, as result of which he would die.

Rashbam seems to understand Rebekah's motive for stealing the Teraphim. He in-
 forms us that the ancients used the Teraphim to divine and practise magic, and she
 174
 stole them to prevent Laban from learning that Jacob intended to flee from him. Quite
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 frankly he tells us that the ancient chieftains often resorted to magic. Even the law
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 not to drink blood he relegates to the province of magic.

The foundation which he assumes for the different laws in the Pentateuch gives an interesting cross-section of Samuel ben Meir as exegete. The law forbidding the mixing of meat and milk, the law prohibiting the killing of young animals and their mothers on the same day, and the law against taking the mother bird and her young, or even her eggs, he feels have an ethical basis. To consume old and young at the same time shows hate and rapacity. It is Scripture's intention to instruct us in morals and in a way of life which rests on culture and refinement.¹⁷⁷

Rashbam bases Biblical laws on grounds other than the ethical. For example, he regards the law forbidding the hip nerve as an historical memorial of national importance, in order to remember the bravery of Jacob in battle, and his divine escape.¹⁷⁸ He looks upon the law concerning the unnatural mixture in the animal and in the plant world, which has been established by God according to immutable laws, as an aid for the strengthening of religious consciousness.¹⁷⁹ The Feast of Booths is to serve a similar function, and he bases it on the simple and beautiful idea that humility and gratitude were intended to be awakened at the time of the richest harvest blessing by the exchange of the comfortable and rich dwelling places with the poor huts, and by a remembrance of the tent life in the unbearable wilderness.¹⁸⁰ According to Rashbam, the trumpet call at the first of the seventh month is to be a means of reminding us of God.¹⁸¹ His comment on the law forbidding the eating of unclean animals is extremely interesting. The animals, he says, are repulsive. They harm the body, as expert doctors testify, and, therefore, they are unclean.¹⁸² The reason he gives for covering the blood of animals and fowls after they are slaughtered is to make it unusable.¹⁸³

Samuel ben Meir informs us that a great many of the laws in the Bible are natural laws, emanating from the necessities of social intercourse, as, for example, hospitality, stealing, covetousness. These, he says, were practised before Sinai. When Moses gave the Torah to Israel, they were merely renewed, and Israel made a covenant to preserve them.¹⁸⁴ He also speaks of the moral side of personality. Joseph's refusal to return to his father without having found his brethren, he takes as an indication of Joseph's nobility.¹⁸⁵ He also emphasizes the attitude taken in the betrothal of Rebekah.

Although God desired this union, Rebekah is asked if she wants to return with Eliezer and become Isaac's wife. No doubt Rashbam, living in an environment where women were not on an equal footing with men, was well pleased with the Biblical emphasis upon the sacred character of woman's personality.

The charge is often made against Rashbam that he is too radical as an exegete. We have already quoted Mendelssohn's statement that Samuel ben Meir was too much the slave of literal interpretation and consequently often strayed from the truth. Mendelssohn's criticism is undoubtedly due to his fear that some of Rashbam's interpretations endangered the Halacha. In the preceding chapter we saw that nothing could be further from the truth. Samuel ben Meir was a pious and observant Jew, and he considered the Halacha to be of paramount importance. But he saw no reason for a conflict between the law and the literal interpretation of Scripture. To be sure, he was cognizant of the manner in which many Halachic practices were evolved, the hermeneutic rules, and so on. Yet he felt that this should not change the peshatic meaning of the text. Briefly we may summarize his attitude thus: the literal meaning of Scripture must not change the Halacha, but at the same time, the Halacha must not pervert the literal meaning of Scripture. When Rashbam tells us that the law was pronounced for humanitarian reasons, that it is cruel to seethe a kid in its mother's milk, he does not for a moment infer that the whole system of Kashruth, which is based on this statement, should be dispensed with. It is not difficult to imagine the scholarly Samuel ben Meir throwing up his hands in holy horror at the intimation. And when he regards the statement, "And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes," as a symbolic expression of the miracles and commandments of God, he is not suggesting that Jews cease donning their phylacteries. Wear the tephilin, wear them daily, is Rashbam's attitude, but at the same time understand what is at the root of the Biblical statement. Keep every detail of the laws of Kashruth, but know what the literal meaning of the Scriptural text is.

Surely Samuel ben Meir never profaned the Sabbath. It can hardly be doubted that every Friday evening he greeted the Sabbath bride even as did his pious fellow Jews.

Yet he felt that it could not be proved from Scripture that the day began at sunset and ended at sundown. From the literal meaning of the text he could draw no other conclusion than that the day began at dawn and ended at sundown. He points out that Scripture always mentions "light" first, and then "darkness." Thus אור היה אור היה is written first, and then follows אור היה. It isn't written אור היה, "and it was night and it was day," but אור היה, "It was evening," for God made the evening come over the first day and caused the light to set, and then follows אור היה, "It became morning," i.e., the morning of the night, the dawn of the morning. ¹⁹⁰ Rashbam was not trying to propagandize for a change in the Halacha. He did not want the Sabbath to commence Saturday morning and end Saturday night. He merely wanted it understood that regardless of the Halacha, such was the actual literal interpretation of the text. Yet no less a liberal spirit than Abraham ibn Ezra felt called upon to write "The Sabbath Epistle," a defense of the traditional Sabbath, which he felt was threatened by Rashbam's subversive interpretation. So great was ibn Ezra's wrath that he wrote in pious anger, "May the hand of him who ¹⁹¹ wrote this wither, and may his eyes be darkened."

It is interesting to note, however, that Samuel ben Mair may be considered conservative in comparison with this same ibn Ezra. The latter has been suspected of doubting the complete Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, a criticism which cannot be levelled against Rashbam. He evidently assumed this as a fact, and never questioned it. In fact, Rashbam often refers specifically to Moses as responsible for certain ¹⁹² peculiarities in Scripture. Nor does Rashbam feel that certain inherent difficulties in Scripture are beyond explanation or harmonization. Samuel ben Mair might possibly be called a Biblical critic, but not in our sense of the term. He may be said to be a Biblical critic who sensed difficulties, (noted interpolations) and inconsistencies, but who made it his task to harmonize them, rather than disrupt the text and ascribe a multiple authorship to the Bible. For example, Rashbam sees no difficulty in the fact that Genesis 1:27 refers to the creation of man and woman, whereas Genesis 2:21 speaks of man alone, from whom a rib is taken to form woman. This merely fits in with

his rule that Scripture first gives a generality, and later explains it. Thus, in Genesis 2:21 it is explained how woman was made, whereas in Genesis 1:27, it is merely stated that she was created. ¹⁹⁴ Rashbam also notes that Genesis 19:1 states וַיֵּרָא

וַיֵּרָא. What happened to the third angel? In Genesis 18:7 it is ^{practically} stated: וַיֵּרָא, and in Genesis 18:22 it is written: וַיֵּרָא

וַיֵּרָא. Rashbam, who identifies God with His angels when Scripture ¹⁹⁵

represents God as doing something or speaking to someone on earth, says that "God" in

Genesis 18:17 and 22 refers to the greatest of the three angels. By this reasoning, ¹⁹⁶

the text is harmonized. Rashbam also noticed that the text in Genesis 14:17 ff., did not read smoothly, that verse 21 should follow verse 17. Verses 18-20 certainly look

like an insertion. Rashbam rationalizes thus: these verses, he says, particularly

verse 18, were inserted to show that Abraham actually returned everything to the king ¹⁹⁷

of Sodom, as he had promised, with the exception of that which his men had eaten.

Rashbam's commentary reveals many similar attempts to harmonize difficulties ¹⁹⁸ in the text. Some of these are excellent, others but fair rationalizations. In the following chapter some of these will be cited, together with his achievements in the fields of general exegesis and philology.

CHAPTER V

ACHIEVEMENTS

It has been pointed out that Samuel ben Meir directed his efforts from early youth to free exegesis from its Aggadic and traditional embellishments and evolve a natural interpretation of Scripture. Whether he attained his ambition to write a new commentary to the Pentateuch which would be considered as the most magnificent accomplishment of the North French exegetical school, is debatable. But certain it is that he held fast to his peshatic ideal and achieved much in the realm of natural exegesis. Generally speaking, his work is considered of great significance by all students of exegesis. He plumbed the depths of Scripture to ferret out a literal interpretation. His achievements can be more fully appreciated, however, by an actual reading of his commentary than by a brief description of it. In the succeeding paragraphs illustrations will, therefore, be cited of his peshatic method in order to reveal the excellence of his accomplishments. It would be wrong to suppose that Rashbam's exegetical contribution is perfect in all its aspects. Many of his interpretations cannot be approved altogether; others are plausible, but actually untenable. If a fair analysis of his work is to be given, the more or less unacceptable interpretations will likewise have to be mentioned. Therefore, a few examples of the latter will be given together with the aforementioned illustrations of excellent interpretation.

Rashbam's interpretation of the detailed observations concerning the purchase of the cave of Machpelah serves as a very good example of our commentator's peshatic approach. He distinguishes between the circumstances which surrounded the purchase of the cave and the permanent designation of the ground as a burial place, which was first determined by the actual burying of Sarah. Payment of the silver gave Abraham the claim to ownership, but his permanent possession was made definite only after his wife was interred. This is clearly seen, according to Samuel ben Meir, from the phrase וְהָיָה הַקְּבוּרָה לְבְנֵי חֵת, which specifies that it no longer belonged to the children of Heth

Another illustration is his comment on the name "Keturah." In five brief words he gives his interpretation, and at the same time he silently criticizes Rashi who

identifies Keturah with Hagar. Thms: גן עץ חיים 201

When Eliezer asks Abraham what he should do if he fails to secure a wife for Isaac from the patriarch's native land, Abraham replies that God will send His angel to see that Eliezer brings back a wife. Rashbam interprets Abraham's reply thus: God brought me here to Canaan and gave my seed this land. Therefore, I know He does not want my seed to leave this country. Otherwise, why did He bring me here? Consequently, I am certain God will make your journey a success and will fulfill His promise to me. 202

The angels which Jacob saw in his dream are described in Scripture as "ascending and descending." Rashi culled his explanation of this phrase from Bereshit Rabba. To him it is significant that the text reads "ascending," and then "descending." The angels, says Rashi, who accompanied Jacob in the land of Israel were not permitted to leave Canaan, and they ascended to heaven. The angels, who were to be Jacob's escort once he left Canaan, then descended to accompany him. But Rashbam tersely remarks that there is no significance in this phrase at all, that it is customary to mention one's ascent before his descent. 203

Rashbam accurately points out that Jacob and his sons were flattered by the proposition which Hamor made to them, while the whole matter was presented in an opposite manner to the inhabitants of Shechem, in order to win them to the contract. Jacob and his sons are told that they may take whomever they would select for themselves from the daughters of Shechem, and that the former may give their daughters to the men of Shechem. When, however, Hamor and his son tried to inflame their own people to agree, they reversed their words, telling them that they would take whomever they pleased from the women in the Hebrew group, and give their daughters to the sons of Jacob. 204

Another excellent example of Samuel ben Meir's exegesis is the conclusion he comes to that it was customary to give a new name to anyone who entered the household as a servant. He makes this comment on the verse in Genesis which tells us that Joseph was given an Egyptian name when he entered into closer relations with the royal house and throne. He compares this with the new name which Moses gave Joshua, and 205

with the Babylonian name which Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel.

Despite his many fine comments, Samuel ben Meir offers in the very opening remarks of his commentary on the Book of Genesis, an interpretation which cannot be approved altogether. He explains the Biblical process of Creation by stating that the "upper heavens" and the earth had already been created. The earth, however, was without creatures which we recognize in it now. Water filled the space between the earth and the "upper heavens," and a wind hovered upon the waters. After a longer or shorter period of time, God created the light, and therewith the first day of Creation began. On the second day God created a broad expanse, stretching in all directions, which parted the waters. This was called the heavens. In reality, however, it is the "under heavens." God's wind blew severely, and on the third day, the earth, which had long since been created, became apparent.

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Another interpretation which is unacceptable is his statement on the forms of asseveration of the servant of Abraham and of Joseph to his father in the laying of the hand under the loins. Rashbam considers this an expression of subservience, and deems it proper in the case of a servant or a son, whereas he regards the passage through the parts of a dismembered animal or the handshake as customary among equals. Included, also, in the group of unacceptable comments is Rashbam's interpretation that the large stone, which Jacob had to roll away from the shepherd's well, was a precaution taken to prevent people from falling in, or unauthorized persons from drawing water. Altogether untenable is his assertion that the mount to which Abraham was to take Isaac was not Moriah, but Amorish, and means the land of the Amorites.

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A number of interpretations might be added to those already mentioned to which we cannot subscribe, but they would not detract from the value of Samuel ben Meir's labors. He would still stand out as the peshatist par excellence, rising far above his contemporaries of Germany and North France. In the field of Hebrew philology, too, he excels his contemporaries. We have already pointed out that Rashbam was not fully acquainted with the philological works of the Spanish school. Menachem and Dunash were his chief sources, but he surpasses both of them, even as he went beyond

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univels; terminology, same as in Rashi.

"often he says Patach when he means Kametz" Yancile "by
one instance + that is borrowed from Rashi where Rashi
means actually Patach (and when Patach becomes Kametz
when dagesh is rejected, see Rashi's Expl. on Ex 22:11
 $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ and the examples he cites there

$\text{קטף קטף} = \dots$ say term used in Menorah + Rashi Ex # 20
or merely קטף see Gen 5:22

נסד for "so Menorah + Rashi
etc

his grandfather, who was also thoroughly familiar with the works of these two grammarians. In the following paragraphs we will enumerate some of his philological comments which reveal his achievements in this field, mentioning particularly his philological references in the Book of Genesis.

Before citing examples of his philological achievements, it would be both advisable and interesting to make a few observations concerning the grammatical terminology he employed, as well as some of his principles of grammar and phonetics.

Rashbam uses five well known names for the Hebrew vowels, namely, kometz, patach, tzeri, chirick, and melofun, by which he means cholom. For the shirik he does not seem to have a name, but denotes it only by its sound, i.e., shirik. Often he says patach when he means kometz, kometz koton when he should say tzeri, patach when segol is meant, and chatof kometz for short kametz. The term shewa is not employed by Rashbam at all, but he uses instead chatof. He refers to the chatof patach, and the chatof patach koton, by which he means chatof segol. The customary name, mapick, is given as the sign for consonantal "he." Rashbam indicates a pointed, or non-aspirated, consonant, by the term dagesh, even as we do. An unpointed, or aspirated, consonant he terms "rofeh." In this connection he lays down the rule that a sibilant, like sof "samach," closes the syllable, and the begadkefas letters which follow immediately are aspirated. He also points out that when the accent is on the last syllable of a word which has a cholom (melofun), and the word is followed by a word with the accent on the first syllable, the cholom changes to short kometz, and the words are joined by a makef, or hyphen.

Rashbam notes that there is a certain basis or root to every verb, in contradistinction to the prefixes and suffixes which serve to build up the verb. He employs several terms to designate the root, namely, קרא, אלו, and על. It is interesting to observe that Samuel ben Meir was not acquainted with the works of Hajjug and ibn Janah, and yet by independent investigation arrived at the tri-literal-ity of Hebrew roots. In this respect he superceded Menachem and Dunash, and even Rashi, who still adhered to the single-lettered root. But Rashbam did not free him-

believed that certain roots were uniliteral

self from the use of two-lettered roots in *ayin-vov* verbs, and occasionally even offers two-lettered roots for *ayin-ayin* verbs.

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The term Rashbam employs to designate the verb is "loshon poal." Past tense

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he denotes by "lashe'avar," future tense by quoting the imperfect of לִיָּא, e.g.,

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לִיָּא לִיָּא, present tense by the phrase לִיָּא לִיָּא, and the imperative

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by לִיָּא. He distinguishes between the present participle לִיָּא, and the

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passive participle לִיָּא. The Qal conjugation he designates as לִיָּא.

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לִיָּא, and לִיָּא. The Piel is indicated by לִיָּא. He

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terms the Hiphil לִיָּא and לִיָּא. The Hithpaal is לִיָּא, and

it is interesting to note his observation that metathesis occurs in the Hithpaal when

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the root of the verb begins with a dental or a sibilant. *not generally surprising see Rashbam for this rule frequently repeats Gen 24:2*

251 44:16. Menashe + Demas also go

The expression "shem dovor" is used to denote the noun. Gender is naturally indi-

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cated by "sochor" and "nekeboh." The construct state is expressed by לִיָּא.

Now follow illustrations of Samuel ben Meir's philological comments. In Gen. 1:29

he points out that לִיָּא is a perfect of certitude, and has the force of the parti-

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ciple. As proof he quotes Genesis 14:22 and 23:13. Rashbam accurately points out

in Genesis 30:1 that לִיָּא is a participle, as shown by the accent on the first syl-

lable, whereas לִיָּא in Genesis 48:7 is a perfect, as shown by the accent on the last

syllable.

He correctly identifies לִיָּא in Genesis 31:39 as the Piel of לִיָּא, with the

meaning "bear the loss," and he calls attention to the fact that the aleph of the root

is missing. He makes no comment on the nun epenthetic, which may or may not signify

that he was not familiar with it, but he adds that the form is correct and often

appears.

In Genesis 32:5 Rashbam indicates the vowel-weak Pe-aleph verbs and observes

that the first letter completely disappears in the Qal imperfect, as לִיָּא instead

of לִיָּא. In Genesis 49:8 he correctly identifies the root of לִיָּא as

לִיָּא, and points out that the yod is dropped in conjugating the verb and vov used

instead. The same observation is made in Genesis 45:11 regarding לִיָּא.

Rashbam explains in the case of a similar consonant at the end of a word and the beginning of a suffix, that both are amalgamated into one pointed letter. This explanation is made in Genesis 34:16 concerning אֶחָד. This contraction is the general rule in verbs with double consonants (ayin-ayin), as he observes in Genesis 27:12, יָעַן, and Genesis 33:11, יָחַן. In both places he mentions that the dagesh compensates for the missing radical.

His comment on Genesis 28:12 reveals his familiarity with the different shades of meaning which the various conjugations entail. He points out that נִשְׁכַּח is a passive causative (Hopha) conjugation, and shows the difference between the passive causative and the reflexive (Niphal). Likewise, in Genesis 37:18 he informs us that the Hithpael is reflexive, and that אִתְּפַלְּלוּ denotes that they became filled with pangs and crafts towards Joseph.

To avoid mistranslation of the text, Rashbam frequently identifies the roots of verbs. Illustrations of this characteristic are as follows:

1. Correctly identifies נָצַח as the root of נִצְחָה, and נָחַם as coming from נָח. (Gen. 32:8)
2. Points out that נָחַם is an apocopated lamed-he verb form. (Gen. 1:22)
3. Whereas Rashi plays with the word נָחַם, implying that it may mean נִצְחָה from נָח, Rashbam says it comes from the root נָחַם, just as נִצְחָה comes from נָחַם, etc. (Gen. 1:26)
4. Identifies נָחַם as the root of נִחַם. (Gen. 24:20)
5. Identifies נִחַם as an apocopated lamed-he verb form. (Gen. 35:16)

Rashbam, in his comment on Genesis 1:14, points out that וַיִּבְרָא is vocalized with a shewa because it is in the construct state with the word following it.

He cites וַיִּבְרָא as an example of a superfluous vov at the end of a noun without any special significance, quoting it as another form of the construct state of וַיִּבְרָא. (Gen. 1:24) In Genesis 30:37 he correctly identifies וַיִּבְרָא as the construct of וַיִּבְרָא.

Although the gender of a noun is either masculine or feminine, Rashbam points out

So Rashbam
see his rule

that many nouns have an indeterminate gender, so that both genders are used at the same time in the same sense. This is how he explains אֵל in Genesis 32:8, where it is used both as a masculine and as a feminine noun. He likewise informs us that it is customary for Scripture to use a singular verb with a plural noun, as, e.g., יְהי אִלָּהִים in Genesis 1:14. His comment on Genesis 38:14 states that a noun becomes definite by its article, and therefore, nouns with the article cannot be the names of places, because these are specific, and cannot be made more specific.

Rashbam also makes a number of observations concerning syntax. In Genesis 28:10 he correctly identifies לְבָנָה as an accusative of direction. He recognizes that לְבָנָה is used impersonally in Genesis 48:1. There are two ways in which the word כִּי is used, according to Rashbam. In the first place, it is used as a correlative, and secondly, it does not always assume its logical position in the sentence. When כִּי follows אֲשֶׁר it usually has the force of כֵּן. Rashbam also notes that it is customary for Scripture to omit אֲשֶׁר in most places. The word כִּי is used to denote distant objects; the word אֲשֶׁר to indicate close objects. Among his many other comments is to be found, also, a reference to the use of וְ. It is used, says Rashbam, with the imperfect tense and with the imperative. It is never used with the perfect.

Rashbam's observations
had been made previously

The above mentioned illustrations, both exegetical and philological, help us to attain a greater appreciation of Samuel ben Meir's achievements as exegete. Many more could be multiplied, but the few which we have recorded attest to the claims to greatness which are made in his behalf as Bible exegete. With the perseverance of the scholar, he adhered to his ambition to create a commentary which would explain Scripture naturally, and which would yield the literal meaning of the Holy Writ. The peshat was for him the beginning and the end of Biblical interpretation, and his Pentateuchal commentary reveals that he strayed neither to the right nor to the left in pursuing it. The offspring of revered scholars and saints, reared in a pious and erudite Jewish environment, he carried on the noble tradition of scholarship handed

down by his father and his grandfather, and bore aloft the torch of learning. The urge which impelled Samuel ben Meir to study was a creative one. With little or no training in scientific method, he went about his task in a scientific manner. Despite his unfamiliarity with the brilliant literary productions of the Spanish school, he nevertheless, approximated the discoveries of such exegetes as Hajjug and ibn Janah. Despite the derashic emphasis which was imprinted upon the exegesis of North France, Samuel ben Meir insisted upon the truth and the literal interpretation of Scripture. Though he was a strict adherent of the Halacha, he would not permit the Halacha to pervert the simple meaning of the text, no more than he would allow the Aggadah to color the natural interpretation of a Scriptural verse. Over eight hundred years ago Rashi recognized the greatness of his grandson, Samuel ben Meir, as a peshatist. Our opinion must still be that of the venerable Rashi.

NOTES

1. Oesterly & Box, A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical and Medieval Judaism. London 1920. p. 220
2. Winter und Wunsche, Die Judische Litteratur. Trier 1894. Vol. II., p.277
3. Oesterly & Box, op. cit., p. 220
4. Liber, Maurice, Rashi. J.P.S. 1906. p. 120
5. Ibid., pp. 111-112
6. Ibid., pp. 126 ff.
7. Hutt, John W., Commentaries on the Later Prophets by R. Eleazar of Beaugency, Vol. I, Isaiah. Oxford 1879. p. xxiii ff.
8. Rosin, David, R. Samuel ben Meir als Schrifterklärer. Breslau 1880. p. 2
9. Levy, Antoine, Die Exegese bei den französischen Israeliten vom 10. bis 14. Jahrhundert. Leipzig 1873. p. 17
10. E.g., his comment on Exodus 13:9 concerning the tephilim, which he sets up against the halacha. Says "And they shall be a sign upon thy hands," etc., refers to a symbolic expression, outwardly manifested in the tephilim, of the remembrance and encouragement of the miracles and commandments of God.
See also his comment on Gen. 1:4,5, where he says the day begins at dawn and not at sunset.
See also Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, p. 23, art., Samuel ben Meir
11. Mendelssohn, Moses, Einleitung zur Pentateuch-Ausgabe, p. xxvi, ed. Wien 1846.
12. Rosin, op. cit., p. 3
13. Liber, op. cit., p. 187
14. Rosin, op. cit., p. 3; also note 6
15. Rosin, David, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des R. Samuel ben Meir. Breslau 1881. p.vii
16. Liber, op. cit., pp. 187-188
17. Rosin, Pentateuch-Commentar, p. vii
Pozanski, S., Kommentar zu Ezechiel und den XII Kleinen Propheten von Eliezer aus Beaugency. Warsaw 1913. p. xxxix.
Rosin and Pozanski give Isaac as the oldest, but the reverse is stated in the Sefer Jochsin, p. 218 b, the Sefer Koreh Hadoroth, p. 14a, and the Sefer Shalshelat Hakabaloh, p. 40 a (Amsterdam edition) (1697), -- that R. Samuel was the oldest.
18. Zunz, Leopold, Zur Geschichte und Literatur, Berlin 1919. p. 32
Rosin, Pent.-Com., p. vii-viii
19. Rosin, Ibid., p. viii
20. Zunz, op. cit., p. 70 f.
21. Rosin, R. Samuel ben Meir als Schrifterklärer, p. 5
22. Perhaps the best known is Rashbam's comment on Gen. 37:2.

23. Rosin, Pent.-Com., p. ix
24. See Rashbam to Baba Batra 73 a : בב שמדתי מאבא מרי
 " " " " " 168b : מבאנתי בבירוש מורי אבי שחיה
מבתיבת יבי נקני רש
 " " " " " 66 a : ואנכי נקני נב"א שמתי
 " " " " " 96 b : בב שמדתי מורני נקני בבא מריא
- See also Rashbam to Gen. 25:32 and Numbers 31:49.
25. Rosin, Pent.-Com., p. ix
26. Found in the פירוש רשבי to Erub. I, 274 fol. 159d ed. Riva.
 Quoted in the Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol XI, p. 24, Art., Samuel ben Meir
27. Rosin, Rashbam als Schrifterklärer, p. 8
28. Poznanski, op. cit., p. xlv
29. See Rashbam to Gen. 33:18; 49:9; 49:16
30. Poznanski, op. cit., p. xlix
31. See Rashbam to Gen. 49:10; Ex. 20:13; Lev. 19:19.
32. See Rashbam to Gen. 49:24, where he describes an "arbalatra."
33. Rosin, Samuel b. Meir als Schrifterklärer, pp. 8-9; also p. 9, note 1.
34. Rashbam to Numbers 11:35
35. Rashbam to Numbers 30:2
36. Rosin, Pent.-Com., pp. ix-x
37. Ibid., p. x
38. Ibid., pp. x-xi
39. Zunz, op. cit., p. 70
40. See Revue des études Juives, I, 230, Article by Zadok Kahn. Kahn shows that on Rabbenu Tam's statement in Sefer Hayoshor, p. 73 a, first column, Zunz based himself in his Z.g., p. 70, that Rashbam was still alive in 1153.
41. p. 218
42. Rosin, Pent.-Com., p. xi
43. Ibid., p. xii
44. Ibid., p. xxiii

45. Illustrations of his use of Biblical passages as parallels or proofs, are the following: Genesis 1:21,30; 8:15; 18:1; 18:5,6; 20:13; 23:2.
46. See Rashbam to Gen. 25:22 where he says לֹא כִּי אֵתָּה instead of וְלֹא כִּי אֵתָּה, in quoting from Ex. 18:15.
Also Gen. 30:21, where he says וְהָיָה instead of וְהָיָה, in quoting from Gen. 46:17.
47. Rashbam to Gen. 37:17: אֲבִי כִּי כִּי עַל כֵּן הָיָה כִּי הָיָה
His memory failed him on this point, as Dathan is mentioned in II Kings 6:13.
Rashbam to Gen. 49:11: וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה
There is no verse like this in the Bible. No doubt due to faulty memory.
48. Rosin, Pent.-Com., p. xxiv
49. Gen. 21:16; 25:28; 26:26; 38:2; 40:11; 41:45; 45:24,26
50. Gen. 25:28; 40:11; 41:45; 45:24
51. Gen. 49:1, where he attacks an interpretation of the Targum Onkelos, but does not mention the source he is refuting.
52. Ex. 2:6; 25:30
53. Lev. 11:28
54. Ex. 15:2; Lev. 20:17
55. Ex. 15:2; Lev. 20:17
56. Gen. 49:10; Ex. 20:13
57. Page 5
58. Gen. 18:10 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה (Yoma 8:1)
Gen. 24:58 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה (Ketub. 5:2)
Gen. 26:26 Refers to Rosh Hashonah without specific reference.
Gen. 27:36 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה (B.B., 9:1)
Gen. 45:19 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה (Bechor. 4:4)
59. Ex. 6:14 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה
Num. 11:35 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה
60. Ex. 21:18 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה
61. Ex. 27:20 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה
Num. 11:35 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה
62. Gen. 37:2 וְהָיָה כִּי הָיָה

63. Gen. 1:27 אין מצותי בלע מצותי של ר"א בן של ר"א
- Gen. 37:2 אין יצ' שלם ואת' מצותי של ר"א בן של ר"א
64. Lev. 26:35 ביתא רבא (Refers to Seder Olam, perek 13)
65. Gen. 19:24 אין היא בבל רבא
- Gen. 30:11 אין בל' רב'
66. Ex. 32:19 אין באית' בברק' של רב' אל'א
67. Gen. 19:24 אין היא בבל רבא ואת' חמא
68. Gen. 22:1 אין מצותי אחרי' בן חמא של חמא
69. Rosin, Pent.-Com., p. 46, note 10
70. Num. 12:1 בבית' בבל' הימים חמא רב'
71. Gen. 36:31 מצותי ב'אס'א
72. Gen. 27:27 אין ב'א' רב' אל'א רב'א
73. Deut. 32:10 אין 30" רב'א. See also Rosin, Samuel ben Meir also Schrift-
erklärer, p. 64, note 6.
74. Gen. 50:2
75. Lev. 19:20
76. Ex. 34:33; 16:15
77. Page 4
78. Gen. 37:2
79. Gen. 45:26
80. Gen. 25:21; 27:37; 41:15-16
81. Gen. 1:1; 18:5; 20:6; 24:21
82. Gen. 24:21; 27:28
83. Gen. 1:30; 19:12; 19:31; 23:4,9; 26:1,8,12,28; 27:28,29,45; 30:11; 31:31,42; 34:9;
41:42
84. Ex. 12:1
85. Yal. Ex. 12:2
86. Gen. 1:1; 15:6; 18:8; 21:9; 23:2; 25:6; 27:3,9; 28:12; 32:6,15; 33:7,18; 34:25;
35:22; 36:24; 38:26; 41:45; 47:29; 49:9,10,16.
87. Gen. 18:8; 32:6

88. Gen. 37:2
89. Ibid.
90. Gen. 1:1,5,11; 11:4; 15:16; 18:8; 20:16; 24:23; 25:1,17,19,28; 26:5; 28:12; 32:6;
32:15; 32:28 (twice); 33:7,18,20; 36:24; 37:2,17,28,36 (twice); 38:15,24;
41:45; 45:1; 45:12; 46:8; 49:1,10,15.
91. Gen. 37:2
92. Gen. 45:28
93. Poznanski, op. cit., p. xliii
94. Ibid.
95. Gen. 1:1; 37:2
96. Gen. 18:7; 42:8; Ex. 12:48
97. Gen. 21:33
98. Page 12
99. Gen. 18:8; 32:15
100. Gen. 1:1,4,5; 25:1; 31:32; 38:15; 41:45; 47:29
101. Gen. 20:16; 28:12; 34:25
102. Rosin, Samuel ben Meir als Schrifterklärer, pp. 83-84
103. Gen. 25:31
104. Gen. 25:33
105. Gen. 27:24
106. Gen. 27:36; See also Rosin's note 4 on this verse.
107. Gen. 18:1
108. Gen. 18:10
109. Gen. 45:24
110. Gen. 27:36
111. Gen. 30:11
112. Gen. 30:20
113. Gen. 15:1; 22:20
114. Gen. 24:25;
115. Gen. 25:24; 41:7

116. Gen. 29:25
117. Gen. 28:9
118. Gen. 36:22
119. Num. 26:59
120. Gen. 18:21
121. Gen. 36:24
122. Gen. 36:39
123. Gen. 1:1
124. Ex. 20:8
125. Gen. 1:1
126. Gen. 15:5 explains 25:8
 19:15 " 19:23
 20:4 " 20:6
 20:7 " 20:18
 22:17 " 24:60
 24:1 " 24:35
 24:10 " 24:54
 25:28 " Chapter 27
 25:34 " 27:36
 26:25 " 26:32
 26:34 " 27:1
 26:35 " 27:46
 28:11 " 28:18
 29:31 " 30:1
 37:23 " 37:32
127. Gen. 1:29; 22:1; 23:11; 24:65; 25:25; 26:26,35; 27:33; 29:17; 30:33; 37:19;
 41:8; 45:24; 49:5,23,24 (two).
128. Liber, op.cit., p. 95
129. Gen. 1:16; 28:10; 31:42; 32:2; 40:16
130. Gen. 40:16; 42:21
131. Gen. 28:11; 31:33; 37:8
132. Gen. 18:25; 22:14; 23:12; 34:7-8
133. Gen. 19:2; 28:19; 45:8; 49:6
134. Pages 4-5
135. Gen. 37:2
136. Gen. 33:18; 49:9, 16

137. Gen. 45:28
138. Gen. 37:13
139. Poznanski, op. cit., p. xlvii
140. Gen. 1:26
141. Gen. 1:27
142. Gen. 3:8
143. Gen. 18:1
144. Gen. 18:25
145. Gen. 18:17
146. Gen. 18:22
147. Gen. 22:12
148. Gen. 26:1
149. Gen. 26:2
150. Gen. 1:31
151. Gen. 2:3
152. Gen. 21:7
153. Gen. 1:27
154. Ibid.
155. Gen. 18:1
156. Gen. 18:16
157. Gen. 22:13
158. Gen. 18:9
159. Gen. 32:2
160. Rashi to Gen. 32:2 which he derives from Gen. Rabba 74.
161. Deut. 18:22
162. Gen. 20:7
163. Gen. 25:23
164. Gen. 25:22
165. Gen. 21:7

166. Gen. 21:22
167. Gen. 22:13
168. Gen. 24:66
169. Gen. 27:30
170. Poznanski, op. cit., p. xlix
171. Gen. 1:21
172. B.Bath. 74 b
173. Gen. 19:17
174. Gen. 31:19
175. Gen. 44:15
176. Lev. 19:26
177. Ex. 23:19; Deut. 22:6
178. Gen. 32:33
179. Lev. 19:19
180. Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:43
181. Lev. 23:24
182. Lev. 11:3
183. Lev. 17:13
184. Gen. 26:5
185. Gen. 37:15
186. Gen. 24:58
187. Page 1
188. Page 13
189. Ex. 23:19
190. Gen. 1:5
191. Gressatz, History of the Jews, Philadelphia 1894. Vol.III, p. 374
192. Gen. 1:27; 19:37; 37:2
193. Page 17
194. Gen. 1:27

195. Page 21
196. Gen. 18:16
197. Gen. 14:18
198. Gen. 24:65; 25:30; 29:16,33; 49:3
199. Winter und Wunsche, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 278
200. Gen. 23:18
201. Gen. 25:1
202. Gen. 24:7
203. Gen. 28:12
204. Gen. 34:9. Rashi makes a similar comment. See Rashi to Gen. 34:16.
205. Gen. 41:45
206. Gen. 1:1,6,8,9
207. Gen. 24:2
208. Gen. 29:2. Other unacceptable interpretations may be found in Gen. 1:27; 41:10; 49:16,18,19,21.
209. Gen. 22:2
210. Page 8
211. Poznanski, op. cit., pp. xlvii-xlviii
212. Ex. 5:15
213. Ex. 28:11
214. Gen. 49:5
It is very possible that Rashbam did not employ this term, but only "kometz koton." The word "tzeri" in the text looks like it might have been inserted by a later editor who wanted to elucidate the expression "kometz koton."
215. Gen. 49:5
216. Gen. 26:35
217. Ex. 18:28
218. Ex. 22:19
219. Gen. 49:5. See note 214.
220. Gen. 32:26
221. Gen. 26:35

- 222. Gen. 1:14; 38:14
- 223. Ex. 25:10
- 224. Ex. 16:23
- 225. Gen. 47:13
- 226. Gen. 1:22
- 227. Ibid.
- 228. Gen. 42:35
- 229. Gen. 38:9
- 230. Gen. 47:13
- 231. Gen. 32:5
- 232. Gen. 49:8
- 233. Rashi to Num. 21:11
- 234. Ex. 12:4
- 235. Ex. 9:17
- 236. Gen. 49:4
- 237. Gen. 1:28; 30:1; 44:3
- 238. Gen. 27:20
- 239. Gen. 49:4
- 240. Gen. 1:22
- 241. Gen. 30:1
- 242. Gen. 1:6
- 243. Gen. 26:26
- 244. Gen. 1:22,28; 19:13; 28:14; 45:24
- 245. Gen. 38:17
- 246. Gen. 1:22,28; 19:13; 45:24
- 247. Gen. 26:26
- 248. Gen. 50:9
- 249. Ex. 9:17
- 250. Gen. 24:21

251. Gen. 24:20

252. Gen. 30:38

253. Gen. 1:1,14; 30:37; 49:12

254. It is interesting to note that the American Translâtion of the Bible translates these passages as Rashbam does. The J.P.S., on the other hand, renders Gen. 1:29 and 14:22 as perfects, and 23:13 as an imperfect.

255. Gen. 24:25

256. Gen. 29:30; 46:4

257. Gen. 18:15

258. Gen. 18:5

259. Gen. 37:19

260. Gen. 49:6