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R A S H I

AS EXEGETE OF THE PENTATEUCH

T H E S I S

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

Rashi marks a new epoch in the history of Bible Exegesis¹. Hitherto the prevailing method of interpreting the Holy Scriptures was largely Midrashic. It concerned itself very little with the plain and natural meaning of the text. The aim in studying the Bible, (particularly the Pentateuch) was not so much to learn what it actually contained as to search out the truths hidden between the lines; to find in the laws of Moses the bases for current religious practices and beliefs. Those passages which did not lend themselves for the purposes of Halacha were interpreted along the lines of Haggada, and the Darshanim of that age were not content with the existing Haggadic expositions, which at least were grounded upon the context. They invented interpretations of their own, which had not the faintest bearing upon the letter or the spirit of the text.² Rashi's Commentary to the Pentateuch was a decided departure from this system. It blazed the way for a new approach to the Bible, one that was more scientific, more simple, more true to the original thought of the context.

Like all men who have arisen above their contemporaries and pointed the way to new endeavors, Rashi was the child of his times. His exegetic method was influenced by, or perhaps more correctly, was the product of his age and environment. The eleventh century was characterized by a deep and earnest religious movement.³ The peaceful conditions of the age were conducive to learning. Various orders of the monks bu-

1) Zunz, Zur Geschichte und Literatur p 62

2) Kronberg, Raschi als Exeget, p.24

3) Geiger, Jarschanda.

sied themselves with copying manuscripts.¹ Individuals used the opportunity to learn Hebrew from the Jews.² There was a strong and manifest desire to get at the sources of religion. But the greatest hinderance to the study of the sources, (that is the Bible), was the poor exegesis of the times. The Christians had as yet no Bible in their own language.³ Their exegesis relied on the Vulgata and the Commentary of Hieronymus which were full of mistakes and corruptions. Both employed the allegoric method and abounded in symbolisms and legends. The need for a sounder and a natural interpretation of the Holy Scriptures was great, and the demand for the same was beginning to make itself felt more and more. It found strongest expression in the city of Troyes, the birth place of Rashi.

Troyes was the seat of learning in the Champagne. Here large assemblies of the prominent heads of the Church took place. In 1089 a council was held in which seventy-five Bishops and twelve Abbés participated, so that Troyes came to be known as the "City of Synods."⁴ From here radiated the impulse to spiritual striving throughout the Champagne. It was therefore natural that here the determined effort should be made to get at the true interpretation of the Bible. At first, attempts were made to correct the Vulgata, but no amount of endeavor in that direction could help. It only led to greater confusion. There was but one solution, to approach the Jews, who were the only ones competent to interpret the Bible correctly; and both theologians and scholars availed themselves of the opportunity. We are therefore not surprised to find a growing love for the Peschat among the Jews, corresponding to the ten-

1) Berliner, Rashi Vortrag, p. 7.

2) Ibid.

3) The Psalms were first translated into French 1100. Ibid.

4) Berliner Blicke in d. Geisteswerkstatt Raschi's. p 21

dency in the Christian World. Already in the beginning of the eleventh century Menachem ben Chelbo and Joseph ben Yakar² sought to introduce a simple and natural method of exegesis as opposed to the allegorical and the figurative,¹ but it remained for the master-mind of Rashi, their disciple to crystallize the movement, and to give it lasting expression.

The foundations for Rashi's work however, were laid by Rabbenu Gershom (Light of the Exile **אור הגולה** d. 1028) and Joseph Tob Elem, the two outstanding personalities of their age who through their works sought to preserve the writings of the past from oblivion.² The great handicap to scholarship at the time was the scarcity of manuscripts. It is told of Rabbi Elieser ben Isaac the Great that he never studied the Gemara to tractate Aboda Zora because he could not obtain a copy of the same. In many of the cities the worshipers in the Synagogues during the Festivals had to pray by heart because there were no prayerbooks. Only the cantor was the proud possessor of a written Machzor, which was very costly and could be provided only by large communities.³ The cities of Worms and Mayence, the centers of Jewish learning, provided against this handicap by gathering together the commentaries on the Talmud and uniting them into one volume, which could be used by all students. These compilations or codexes, known as Kontros (**קונטרס**) in Worms, and Ferush (**פירוש**) in Mayence contained the Comments of past and contemporary scholars, among them those of Rabbenu Gershom and Joseph Tob Elem. They were public property kept in the Beth Hamidrash and used as an introduction to the study of the Talmud.⁴ Rashi made extensive use of these works in his student years in these cities. Though he does not mention them by name he often refers to them by saying **מאמר** or **קבלה**.

1) Berliner l.c. p.21

2) Berliner, Beiträge z. Gesch. d. Raschi-Commentare p.2

3) Ibid

4) Ibid

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your references do not justify such a strong
statement. In ^{the} 2013 R. merely means to say
that outlets gives a free rendering.

most frequently does not
indicate hi: source

also Rev 14: 43
he had 513 p. 11. 11. 11

see Rosenberg p. 9

513 p. 11

In this connection a few words may be in place concerning the other sources of Rashi's knowledge, specifically those which appear in his Commentary to the Pentateuch -

1. The Bible - which we may say was the prime source of his knowledge and inspiration. Rashi's thorough familiarity with the contents of the Bible is seen from the numerous citations which rarely if ever are incorrect. These citations are generally made without mention of the book or chapter from which they are taken.¹

2. The Targumim - Onkelos and Jonathan. Rashi makes abundant use of Targum Onkelos in his commentary to the Pentateuch. Sometimes he mentions him by name and quotes his interpretation.² Other times he simply refers the reader to the Targum itself.³ Very often he differs with Onkelos and he does not hesitate to say that Onkelos is wrong.⁴

3. The Talmud⁵ - which ranked next to the Bible as the chief source of his knowledge and from which he drew extensively in his commentary. Rashi carefully distinguishes between the Talmudic sources and those of the Midrash. His quotations from the Talmud he generally introduces by **לבושין חכמי המשנה** or **למדו** . Once he says **לבושין חכמי המשנה**.⁶

4. Midrashim -

a. Tanhuma - The Tanhuma which Rashi had before him was much larger and more comprehensive than ours. Much that Rashi brings in the name of the Tanhuma we now have in the Psikta Rabbathi and in Midrash Avchir which did not exist in Rashi's time.⁷

b. Midrash Rabboth Bereshit and Vayikra (יקרא רבה and בראשית רבה)

- 1) It appears from certain passages that Rashi's text differed from the Massora. Ex. 5¹⁶, Rashi had the reading **וְקָטַח** and not **וְקָטַח**. Ex. 25²² Rashi speaks of pleonastic **וְאֵת** in **וְאֵת כֹּל**, which is missing in our text. Gen. 25⁶ he speaks of **פְּלִיפְטִים** defectively spelled, but our text has **פְּלִיפְטִים**.
- 2) Deut. 32²⁴ ; 3) Gen 4⁷
- 4) Gen. 42⁹ ; 20¹³ 5) Num. 22³⁰
- 6) Babb. Rashi was also familiar with the Jerushalmi and the Tosefta.
- 7) Berliner, Kom. u. d. Pent. p 432.

not genuine Rashi passage see Berliner ad. loc.

Most of his interpretations to the Book of Genesis are based on the former Midrash.

b. Mechilta **מכילתא** which formed the basis for Exodus.

c. Sifra - cited by Rashi as Torah Koh^aן **תורת כהנים**, and upon which he based his interpretation of Leviticus, and

d. Sifre - on which he based his comments to Numbers and Deuteronomy.

e. Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer which he sometimes quotes by name and often without mention of name.

5. Jewish authorities from the eighth century to his day.

a. Eleazar Ha Kallir, one of the oldest and most prolific of liturgical poets (**כ"מ**) who lived in the ninth century.

b. Solomon ben Judah (**הובלי**) liturgist of the tenth century.

c. Saadia Gaon of Sura founder of Jewish scientific activity, tenth century.

d. Menachem ben Saruk and Dunash ben Labrat, Spanish philologists of the tenth century. Menachem wrote a biblical dictionary in Hebrew which formed the basis for Rashi's grammatical knowledge.

6. Contemporaries among them Juda Hadarshan of Toulouse and Moses Hadarshan of Narbonne, French Bible commentators. The latter was the most prominent representative of Midrashic - symbolic Bible exegesis. Here may also be included the instruction gained from Rashi's teachers.

The above is but a partial list of Rashi's sources¹. Many more less important and anonymous works appear in his Commentary, while a good many of his sources are unknown to us. Rashi's knowledge was therefore as vast as it was profound. It embraced the entire field of Jewish learning in northern France that could possibly be cultivated. Surely there could be none more competent than he to undertake the stupendous task of interpreting the Bible and the Talmud, and none has ever excelled him in this noble work.

----- 1) For complete list see Berliner, l.c. pp.428-473.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF RASHI

Rabbi Solomon bar Izhak or Rashi¹ as he is familiarly known was born in Troyes, the capital of Champagne in the year 1040 . Unfortunately very little of his biography has come down to us. For a long time the life of Rashi was shrouded in mystery and in legend. Not even his birthplace was a certainty, until the great Zunz came and separated the trustworthy from the false and the historical from the legendary and gave a true picture of the man and his significance in Jewish literature. All that we know of Rashi's childhood is the name of his father and that his mother was the sister of Rabbi Simon ben Isaac. Whether his father was a scholarly man or no, is a mooted question.² But it is probable that the latter from whom he quotes two Talmudic interpretations exerted a great influence upon him and implanted in him a love for study which led him to go to Mayence and Worms. However he laid the groundwork for his studies at home. Rashi tells us how from his youth he tried to solve the difficult problems of the Talmud.³

As was the custom he married young and went to Worms to continue his studies. Here he studied under Rabbi Jacob ben Yakar to whom he held in great esteem and referred to as *מורי בקרא ובמרא* and *מורי חוקן*.⁴ Upon the death of Rabbi Jacob, Rabbi Isaac Halevi took his place. Rashi studied with him for some time, and then went to Mayence where he studied in the school of Isaac ben Juda which rested under the spell of Rabbeinu Gershon "Light of the Exile."

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- 1) Rashi signed himself (*רש"י*). To distinguish him from others by the same name, he was called *רש"י ברלינר*. Berliner, R. Vortrag, p.2.
2) Zunz and Weiss maintain he was; Berliner and Bacher hold opposite.
3) Sukka 40a.
4) Weiss, Dor Dor Vedorshov pt.1V p.284.

Undoubtedly it was his contact here with the great personalities of the age, and the use he made of the commentaries of Rabbenu Gershom that inspired him to his life's work.

Rashi's student days were not free from hardship. He suffered from want of clothing and food.¹ At the age of twenty-five he returned to his native city and became Rabbi.² Already at that early age his reputation as a master of the Talmud was well established, as seen from the many difficult problems sent to him for solution by the greatest scholars of the time. Without any sign of ostentation Rashi modestly gives his opinions and reveals not only his vast knowledge, but the nobility of his character as well.³ Students flocked to his school from great distances, even from Slavic countries, to learn the Bible and Talmud and to his commentaries.

Rashi's great erudition and the knowledge of worldly matters that he revealed in his commentaries to the Bible and the Talmud, excited the admiration and the wonder of later generations. People believed that he was supernaturally gifted, and that a prophetic spirit was in his study. Legend took hold of him and represented him as having undertaken extensive journeys through Italy, Greece, Palestine, Egypt and Persia. But as Zunz ably pointed out,⁴ he never had the means to do so, while he himself never says a thing about them. His commentaries show that he never stepped on Palestinian soil.⁵ Neither should he be accredited with great scientific learning or linguistic ability, as popular fancy would have it. He did not know Persian, Arabic, Latin or German, and very little of astronomy and medicine.⁶

1) Schloessinger, Rashi, His Life and His Work, p.227

2) Beermann, Raschi's Leben und Wirken.

3) Kronberg, Raschi als Exeget, p.5. See Chofes Matmonim, Reso.1 and 2

4) Zunz, Zeitschrift f.d. Wiss. d. Jud., p.282.

5) Rashi believed that Euphrates bounded Palestine. Cf. Gen.15:18.

6) Zunz, l. c. p.283.

The marvelous secular knowledge which Rashi possessed is to be accounted for by the fact that he was a native of Troyes¹. His keen intellect and clear eye found in Troyes a world as a school house. Here he learned to know the diverse trades and occupations, commerce, industry and agriculture which he so accurately describes in his commentaries. Troyes in the days of Rashi was the center of commerce for France and the neighboring countries. Merchants from Italy, Flanders, Germany, Spain, England and in fact from all parts of the world came there to attend the Fairs held twice a year (from the 15th of July to the 15th of September, and from November 2nd to January 2nd). At these Fairs Rashi came in contact with Jews from all parts of the world, learned from them and probably obtained manuscripts from them.

Rashi's years in Troyes were spent in quiet and peaceful pursuits. The Jews of Troyes lived under favorable circumstances. They possessed two synagogues that stood near the churches. They engaged in commerce and in farming, notably the cultivation of the vine. Most likely Rashi earned his livelihood in this manner. We often find him and his grandson, Rashbam in the vineyards or at the vine press, while there are many references to the wine industry in his works.² Rashi had three daughters, one, Miriam, married a pupil of Rashi, Juda ben Nathan. Another married Meir ben Samuel of Ramerupt, whose three illustrious sons, Rashbam, (Samuel ben Meir) ^{were} author of many commentaries; Ribam (p. 7) Isaac, often mentioned in Tosaphoth, and Rabbi Jacob, or Tam founder of the Tosaphoth a second Rashi. Thus Rashi perpetuated himself and his work through his family.

1) Berliner, Blicke p.4

2) Ibid p.7-14.

The latter years of Rashi's life were darkened by the Crusades of 1096 which brought great suffering to the Jews of the Rhine Valley. It is probably with reference to them that his commentary to Isaiah 53g speaks of the servant of the Lord who undergoes martyrdom. Likewise his Selichoth which are very sad in tone are to be assigned to this period¹. On the 26th of July, 1105 Rashi passed away in the midst of his work on the commentaries to the Talmud and the Bible.²

אין עושין נפשות לצדיקים, דבריהם הן זכרון.

"To the great men of spirituality we raise no monuments; their works are their monuments." ³

Rashi has raised a monument for himself in the above sense. His name has become immortal through his works which have been a source of light and inspiration through the generations to this day.

-
- 1) Bacher, Raschi, Jahrbuch für Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur, p. 86 ff.
 - 2) The Commentary on the Bible extends over all the books with the exception of Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah and the last part of Job, Chap. 40²⁷⁻⁴².
 - 3) Jerushalmi Shekalim II 5. Berliner, Zur Charakteristik Raschi's.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMENTARY TO THE PENTATEUCH

The Commentary to the Pentateuch concerns itself with two main tasks:

1. To give a plain and rational interpretation, grounded upon the natural meaning of the words, their grammatical construction and in the light of their relation to the context. "The words of the Torah", says Rashi, "are comparable to a rock which is shattered by a hammer - they are subject to ever so many interpretations. But I have come to give the literal meaning of the Scriptures."¹ At the same time due regard was to be given to the Midrash which was consistent with the basic meaning of the text.²
2. To bring to the attention of the reader those Talmudic precepts, Halachic (civil and ritual) and Haggadic (ethical and religious) which had their origin or sanction in the Pentateuch.

To carry out these two aims Rashi is for the greater part dependent upon Talmudic principles of hermeneutics. He shows his originality however, in the masterly application of these principles which coupled with a fine feeling for the Hebrew, led him in most cases to the true meaning of the text; and secondly in his independence of thought which enabled him to select the best from the vast storehouse of Rabbinic literature.

1) Gen. 33²⁰,
Ex. 14³¹.

2) Gen. 38.

ידברי תורה כפטיש יפחלץ מתחלקים
לכמה מקמים ואני לישב פשוטו של מקרא באתי.
המפורשו יתקן הלשון אחר גנן הדבור.
ואני לא באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא ולאגדה המישיבת
דברי המקרא דבר דבור קל אפנו.

The Commentary to the Pentateuch is not a unified, uninterrupted exposition of the work under consideration, but may best be characterized as a running commentary, that is it consists of detached glosses upon terms or phrases as they appear consecutively in the text. These glosses or explanations are always preceded by the words they seek to explain, and must be read in the light of the context in order to fully appreciate the point that Rashi desires to make clear.

Illustration: Gen. 11-2.

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת

הארץ והארץ היתה תהו ובהו ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים

Rashi: אפר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל וגו' : בראשית
 אין המקרא הזה אומר אלא דרשנא: בראשית ברא
 ולא נאמר ברא ה' וגו' : ברא אלהים
 2 תהו לשון תמה : תהו ובהו
 אשמורדישון בלי : ותהו
 לשון קות ולדה : בהו

At first glance the reader unfamiliar with Rashi might be tempted to pass harsh criticism, and with Liber exclaim-

"Rashi's works do not bear witness to great originality or better to creative force. Rashi lacks elevation in point of view, breadth of outlook and largeness of conception. He possessed neither literary taste nor esthetic sense."¹ But such a characterization is as wrong as it is unjust. There is a decided beauty and charm in his style which captivates the student as he goes deeper and deeper into the Commentary. His language is clear and pleasing, his explanations plain and unsophisticated, free from verbosity, (פלפול) or flowery discourses. Whatever he says, he says clearly and concisely. Rashi's "originality, his creative force, his literary taste", consist in this very fact that he did not seek to display his scholarly attainment or literary ability, but wrote simply and naturally. It has been well said of him 'הוא היה רק הפרשן ולא הדרשן' 2

Nevertheless he does not hesitate at times to employ the method of the

1) Liber, Rashi, p. 92.

2) Weiss, l.c. p. 288.

Darshan, in order to lend color and interest to his work. Thus he will often take the part of the persons in the text and ardently plead their cause,¹ or he will introduce a fascinating homily² (משל) or a striking proverb.³ Sometimes he will even indulge in a clever witticism,⁴ all of which relieves the monotony and give a unique charm to what might otherwise be a dry and uninteresting literal exegesis.

Rashi's Hebrew which is for the most part easy and fluent is a composite of Biblical and Mishnaic, with a few Aramaisms thrown in here and there.⁵ Rashi occasionally likes to lapse into the style of the Mishna as well as to interweave in his text Biblical and Talmudic phrases.⁶ He is also very fond of punning⁷ and explaining names,⁸ and often indulges in Gimatrios,⁹ that is finding a thought in the numerical value of words.

But the outstanding characteristics of his style are his clearness of thought and brevity of expression.¹⁰ Azulai said of Rashi, that he could express in one letter that for which others needed whole pages. He finds the fittest and most forceful expression for a most difficult explanation, but ever with that masterly skill and terseness which allows for no superfluous words beyond those necessary for an understanding of the text. "One or two words suffice for him to sum up an observation, to anticipate a question to forestall an unexpressed objection, to refute a false interpretation or to throw light upon the true meaning of a word or phrase. This is expressed in the saying,

"In Rashi's time a drop of ink was worth a piece of gold." II

1) Gen. 44¹⁸; Ex. 31⁴. 2) Ex. 17⁸; Gen. 37¹. 3) Deut. 25¹; Gen. 15⁸.

4) Gen. 36, 31⁵; 5) Gen. 18⁵, 21².

6) Gen. 19²⁰. ⁷ *מִיִּיקָמָה וְהָאֵשׁ בְּהַמָּקָם* from Koh. 9⁴

Ex. 16²². ⁸ *מִה יָקוּמָה מִיָּמִים* after B. Metz. 59b. ⁹ Berliner, Beitrage p. 31

7) Gen. 37 ³ *שִׁיחַ וְיִיקוּמָה שְׁלֹשׁ דִּמָּה לָּו* (סוף י"ג וְיָקוּמָה)

⁸ Ex. 13¹⁶ *וְלֹא-יָקוּמָה תְּפִלִּין* from *מֵט-טוֹ* and *פֶּת-טוֹ*

Mishnah

However, when necessary he will go into great detail so as to obviate any misunderstanding, and to make the text perfectly clear,¹² so that the expression "to write Rashi" has become proverbial for writing profusely and in detail.

Still another characteristic which cannot escape the reader is the modesty of the author which appears throughout the Commentary. One is overcome with a feeling of reverence and love for this noble sage who humbly and piously goes about his task to interpret the word of God, at no time protruding himself or his own views upon the page, but ever seeking to explain the text in the light of tradition and what he felt to be the original sense. When however he has an individual view to offer he carefully distinguishes it from others', leaving it to the reader to take it for what it is worth.¹³ Never does he force any explanation. When he does not know the meaning of the word or phrase he frankly says, "I do not know its interpretation" or "I do not know what it teaches."¹⁴

So much for a general description of the Commentary. In the following chapters we shall treat in more detail Rashi's method at a simple and natural exegesis.

8) Gen. 14² שונא אבר שבשמים - שנאב
מפרש הצפונות - לפנת פננה

9) Gen. 21⁷ מלל and not דבר used. numerically. This indicates that Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 yrs. old.

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10) Cf. his commentary on the Mishcan and the Ephod Ex. 25ff. and on the boundaries of Canaan Num. IV³⁴.

11) Liber, Rashi n. 95.

12) Gen. 12².

13) Ex. 28⁴.

14) Lev. 13¹⁹; Deut. 32¹² לא שמעתי ולא מלאתי בברייתא פירוש תבעתן ולבי אומר ל
אני אומר

14) Gen. 38¹⁵, Lev. 13⁴.

CHAPTER III

PERUSH HA-MILOTH -- NATURAL EXEGESIS

We have stated above that Rashi was dependent upon Talmudic principles of Exegesis to accomplish the aims of his Commentary. Talmudic hermeneutics distinguishes between two methods of scriptural interpretation.

1. The Peshat (פשוט).
2. The Derash (דרש).

"Peshat is the plain interpretation, where a law or a passage in Scripture is explained in the most natural way according to the letter, the grammatical construction and the spirit of the passage. Hence the Talmudic phrase פשוט דקרא the plain meaning, the immediate and primary sense of a Scriptural passage.

"Derash (from שרש to search, investigate) is that method by which it is intended for certain reasons to interpret a passage in a more artificial way which often deviates from the plain and natural meaning. The result of this method of interpretation is termed שרש that which is searched out, the artificial deduction,"¹

Rashi made the Peshat, which in the lapse of time had fallen into disuse, the guiding principle in his exegesis. He based his interpretations upon lexicography and grammar and above all upon clear and sound judgment. In this respect Rashi was the pioneer, and we may also say the master of sound exegesis. Mendelsohn in the introduction to his Commentary on the Pentateuch says, "Niemand ist ihm an die Seite zu setzen wo er natürlicher Auslegung sich befleißigt."²

1) Mielzißner, Intro. to the Talmud, p. 117.
2) Zunz, l.c. o. 376.

In explaining the words of the text Rashi resorts to the use of synonyms and paraphrase. Illustration:

Gen. 2₅ עדיין = מרם

Ex. 5₈ מכוס חשבון ה' = מתכונת הלבוש

13₈ לקטו = קששו ; מדינים = חמושים

Paraphrase:

Gen. 1₂₀ נפש שיש בה חיות = נפש חיה

13₆ על אשר = על כן

18₅ כשם שאי אפשר לאיש = אשר אם יוכל איש

Very often however he will explain the word.

Illustration:

Ex. 12₉ שאינו צלוי כל צרכו : נא

Lev. 25₃₁ ציירות סתומות מאין חומה : ובתי החללים

25₄₃ שלאכה שלא לצורך כדי לענות : ללמד בן בפרך

Rashi does not say why he interprets a given word in a certain way, unless he differs with some authority (e. g. Onkelos or Menachem or the Rabbis). Generally he give the traditional interpretation which is based upon the current usage of the word or phrase throughout the Bible. His thorough familiarity with the Bible enabled him to summon with little difficulty all the passages needed to attest to the correctness of his interpretation.¹ Oftimes he will give a whole string of quotations which take up more space than his comments.

But it is his grammatical standpoint which stamps his exegesis as scientific. To determine the correct interpretation of a word it must be viewed in the light of the meaning of its root and also its grammatical construction. This principle is very well illustrated

1) Ex. 3₂₂ ; 2₁₀ ; Gen. 18₅ .

in his comment on Ex. 32₂, and Ex. 21₁₀, where in either case he differs with Menachem ben Saruk.

In the first instance, Menachem takes the word וּנְצַלְתֶּם in the phrase וּנְצַלְתֶּם אֶת מִלֵּיכֵיכֶם as meaning to snatch away - in the same sense as וּנְצַלְתֶּם Gen. 31₉ and believes that the נ in וּנְצַלְתֶּם is not part of the root. Rashi points out that Menachem is wrong; that the word means "you will empty out" and that the נ is part of the root. For says he "if the נ were not part of the root, the word as it is at present vocalized with a Chirik under the נ would be intransitive (Niphal) and not transitive as e.g. וּנְצַחְתֶּם מִן הָאֲדָמָה (Deut. 28) וּנְתַתֶּם בִּידֵי אֹיְבֵיכֶם etc. So in the case of every נ which at time appears as radical in a word and at times drops out, like the נ in נושא, נוגף etc., when the verb is used transitively (לְשׁוֹן וּנְצַלְתֶּם) the נ is vocalized with a Sheva, as in the case of וּנְשַׂאתֶם אֶת אֲנִיכֶם Gen. 45 also וּנְתַתֶּם לָהֶם Num. 32 etc. Therefore I say that the letter vocalized with the Chirik (i.e. the נ) is part of the root, and the root is in the noun נֶצֶל, and it belongs to the category of the heavy conjugation (הַלְשׁוֹנוֹת הַכְבֵּדִים) which when used transitively are vocalized with a Chirik like וּנְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הָעָם Num. 20 etc.

The second instance Ex. 21₁₀ involves the definition of מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ. Rashi quotes Menachem's interpretation as "I have removed him" in the same sense as לָאֵשׁ יָמוּשׁ Josh. 1, לָאֵשׁ נִשְׁמַח Num. 14. And he adds "but I say that it is not from the same word as מָשַׁח and יָמוּשׁ but from the root מִשָּׁה and means to draw out e.g. וַיִּמְשַׁח מַיִם רַבִּים II Sam. 22. If it were from the root מִשָּׁה it would not be correct to say מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ but מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ as מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ from קָם and מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ from שָׁב and מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ from בָּא; or the form might be מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ like מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ אֶת עֵין הָאָרֶץ Zah. 3₉. But מִשְׁתִּיתָהוּ belongs to that class of verbs which has a ה"ה as its last radical,

like *בנה, עשה* etc. , and when such verbs are used in the Qual the *עשית, בנית* etc. comes in the place of the *ה'א*.

A very interesting explanation from a lexicographical as well grammatical standpoint is that of *עני וזמרת* Ex. 15₂. says Rashi, "Onkelos interprets these words 'my strength and my praise' that is *עני* like *עני* and *זמרת* like *זמרת*. But I wonder at this expression of the Scripture. For there is no other like it in the Scriptures with a similar vocalization except in the three places where it (*עני*) is used together with *זמרת*. But in all other places it is vocalized with a Shurek e.g. *ה' עני ומעני* Jer. 16 etc. Similarly every word of two letters that is vocalized with a Melophum (i.e. Cholum) when it is lengthened by the addition of a third letter, and the middle letter is not vocalized with a Sheva, the first is vocalized with a ^{Shurek;} *א* e.g. *עני* becomes *עני, עני, עני* etc. but these three expressions of *עני וזמרת*, the one here and the others in Isaiah 12 and in Psalms 118 are vocalized with a Hataf Kametz (i.e. Kametz). Furthermore none of them is written *עני וזמרת* but *עני וזמרת* and all are followed by *ויקה לי ישועה*. Therefore I would say in interpreting this expression of scripture that *עני* is not the same as *עני* and *זמרת* not the same as *זמרת*, but that *עני* is a substantive like *הקשני בשמים* Ps. 123 -- or *שוכני סנה* Deut. 33. And this is the praise (sung by Moses). *עני וזמרת יה הנה לי ישועה*. Now *עני וזמרת* is construct with the word *ה'* like *לעזרת ה'* and the sense of *עני וזמרת* is like that in *לא תזמול* Lev. 25, an expression of cutting off and destruction. Hence translate the passage "The strength and the vengeance of our God was our salvation!" *is this an example of sand grammar? See the book*

Rashi shows his fine sense of the Hebrew Language in such explanation as the one in Gen. 1₁:

וראשית ברא אלמים את השמים ואת הארץ

Libraries have been written concerning the correct translation of this verse. Rashi renders it, "In the beginning of the creation of heaven and earth, the earth was void and waste and darkness, and God said Let there be light." This rendition he bases on sound grammatical reasoning. **בראשית** he points out is in construct state with **ברא**, and is to be taken in the sense of **בראשית ברא**. The use of **ברא** instead of the infinitive **ברוא** is not unique. A similar case is Hosea **תחלת דבריה שלה** in the sense of **תחלת דבריה שלה** in the beginning of God's speaking.

A fairly complete grammar might be constructed embodying the many grammatical points and rules scattered throughout the Commentary.¹ We can mention here briefly only a few of the outstanding features of Rashi as grammarian.

Verbs: Rashi divides the verbs into classes of three syllables, two syllables and monosyllables, and he lays down rules in the course of his Commentary for their various conjugation.² He calls attention to ~~these~~ the differences in vocalization between the various tenses and conjugations and guards the reader against confusion.³ Rashi is handicapped by a lack of proper terminology and sometimes it is difficult to follow him. The verb is termed **לשון פועל**⁴, the root **עקר** or **יסוד** and to conjugate **הפעל**⁵. The tenses are **לשון הווה** for the Present;⁶ **לשון עבר** or **לשעבר** for the Past,⁷ and **לשון עתיד** or **להבא** for the Future.⁸ The Waw consecutive (**ו**) preceding a verb in the **עבר** changes it to **הבא**.⁹ The vowel points are designated as follows, Chatef Kametz for short Kametz; Shurek for Kibbutz; Melophum for Cholem; Kametz Katan for Tsere, Patah Katan for Segol; Chirek is the same.¹⁰

1) This subject is given a fairly comprehensive treatment by Fronberg, Raschi als Exeget, pp.34-50.

2) Gen.49¹⁹, Ex.1²⁰ 3) Gen.8¹², 17¹¹, 44¹⁶, Ex.9¹⁹

4) Ex.19¹⁸ 5) Gen.25

6) Gen.28 7) Gen.6⁹

8) Gen.6⁹, 29³

9) Gen.29¹⁶

10) Kronb³ erg. Raschi als Exeget, p.36.

Nouns: The noun is designated by שמדבר. The two genders are לשון זכר for masculine נקבה and לשון נקבה for feminine. Some nouns like שידע and צדע are used collectively.

Conjunctions: כי has four usages, conditional, temporal, causal, interjectional (if, when, because, and verily) כי משמש בד' לשונות: א', דלמא, אלא, דהא. [Gen. 18, 15]

אם is used relatively, temporally and conditionally.

Particles: את is used in the sense of from מן and, with.

ה is used interrogatively (at the beginning of a word and in a locative sense when coming at the end of the word).

Syntax: Rashi often calls attention to the syntactical relation of the words in a sentence. "Invert the passage and translate it. סדר המקרא
1 2
הרמקו והרמקו והרמקו is a frequent expression to designate that the words are not in their proper order and should be transposed. e.g. Gen. 41:57

וכל הארץ באים מצרימה לטבור אל יוסף

Rashi: Invert the passage and translate, all the land came to Joseph to buy provisions וכל הארץ בא אל יוסף לטבור. For if you translate it in the order that is given it should say לטבור מן יוסף.

Similarly Deut. 4:38 which reads להוריש גוים גדולים ועצומים ממך מפניך. Rashi points out that מפניך ought to be transposed and put after להוריש. the verse thus reads "to drive out before thee nations greater and stronger than thou". So in the case of Deut. 4:11 יום אשר עמדת אשר לא עמדת. Elipses: Rashi calls attention to many elliptical expressions e.g. Gen. 4:5

כל הודגקן Rashi: This is one of the passages that have shortened their words and hinted at the rest but not stated them. Supply כה עשה לו כן וכך עשו לו. Thus shall be done to him and thus and thus shall be his punishment. 3

1) Ex. 25

2) Deut. 4:38

3) also Gen. 13:16, 48:12.

Laazim - (לעזים) French glosses.

In addition to the lexicographical and the grammatical methods, Rashi employs still another means to clarify the text. Very often he gives the equivalent of a word or phrase in the vernacular (French).

Illustration:

Ex. 12⁷, ^{ליניל}מזוזות (linleil), lintel of door.

8¹⁵, גרנוילירא = הגרנדע (grenouilliere), frog.

Lev. 11¹⁹, ציגונא = חמידה (cigogne), stork.

Gen. 26¹⁴, אובראנא = עבדה (ouvraigne), work.

23¹³, דונש = נתתי (dones), given.

1², אקובשיר = המרחפת (acoveter), hover.

Ex. 14¹¹, שיפור זלינצ די נון פושיש = המבלי אין קברים (si pour faillance de non fosses), as if there were no graves

Rashi generally cites the French by בלען. The word לען is of Biblical origin. In Ps. 114¹, we have the phrase, בוצאת ישראל ממלרים בית. לען has the meaning to talk unintelligibly, to stammer, hence comes to have the meaning foreigner. From the original Biblical meaning of foreigner, לען came to mean the non Hebrew speaking native. In Roman times, in Palestine לען designated the Greek. Finally, the term לען or לשון לען as used in the writings of the commentaries of the Middle ages is applied to all languages outside of Hebrew. Commenting on Is. 33¹⁹, Rashi says: עם נעזי: כמו עם לועז, אלו האומות שאין לשונם לשון הקודש.

1) Berliner interestingly points out that every people calls its neighbor whose language it does not understand a stammerer. Thus the Jews called the Egyptians לען. The Greeks called the Romans "barbaros", and the Romans the Germans "barbarus", a word which etymologically is connected with "balbus", stammerer. Similarly the Slav calls his German neighbor "niemiec", the dumb or stutterer. Rashi, Kom. d. d. Pentateuch Anhang, p. 437.

בלעז was later misunderstood for בלשון עבודה זרה or בלשון קס זר.
Hence the writing of the word בלעז.

Rashi was not the first to use French words. We meet with them for the first time in the writings of Rabbeinu Gershom¹. The second to use them was Menachem ben Chelbo² whose interpretations of Scriptures are only extant in the citations by Rashi and by Joseph Kara. In Rashi there are about 3000 Laazimm scattered through the commentaries to the Talmud and the Bible³. These French expressions belong to the same period of French literature of which only two literary products are in existence, "la vie de Saint Alexis", and "La Chanson Roland". Both these works do not give as clear an insight into the every day life of the time as do the 3000 words of Rashi with their references to the practical life and the needs of the time.³

1) Berliner, Raschi Kom. u. d. Pent., Anhang p. 436.

2) A number of attempts, so far incomplete, have been made by various scholars like Moses Landau, Arsène Darmsteter, Schlessinger, et a scientific study of these glosses. Berliner gives a complete list and translation of the Laazim found in the Pentateuch. l.c. p. 439 ff.

3) References to other languages.

Deut. 39 שניר: Rashi says,

הוא שלג בלשון אשכנז ובלשון כנען
Zunz is uncertain whether בלשון כנען is reference to Asiatic or Germanic language. (Zeit. f. d. Wiss. d. Jud. p. 330) Berliner, however, is of the opinion that בלשון כנען stands for Slavic. Many of the students who studied with Rashi in Troyes came from Slavic countries. When they returned to their native lands, they translated the French and German in their manuscripts into the Slavic tongue. Beiträge, pl. 4.

Rashi also gives Hebrew equivalents in בלשון קצרי Ex. 129.

בלשון ארמי Gen. 4122: בלשון ישמעלי Gen. 2914: פירסי Deut. 21

CHAPTER IV
TALMUDIC HERMENEUTICS

It was in his Perush Hamiloth (פרוש המלות), in his striving after the Peshat, that Rashi showed his true originality. But Rashi did not limit himself to the Peshat. He relied upon Talmudic hermeneutics in general. We can distinguish in his Commentary, the following Talmudic methods of Scriptural interpretation:

1. The Derash
2. Ribbui and Miut (רבי ומיעוט)
3. Semuchin (סמיכין)
4. Harmonization.

The Derash.

We have seen how throughout the Commentary, Rashi labored at a literal exegesis. Again and again he asserts that he is concerned with the Peshat and not the Derash. Yet it seems that the Derash had too great a fascination for him, and he could not tear himself away from it. He labored under the misapprehension that the Midrash could be made to conform to the meaning of the text without doing violence to the latter. There is an apparent conflicting tendency in his mind which finds expression in the statements of his exegetic method. Thus while he declares,

¹ אין מקרא יוצא מיד פשוטו and again, ² ואני לי שב פשוטו של מקרא באני
he is evidently compromising with himself when he says, ואני לא באני

³ אלא לפשוטו של מקרא, ולאגדה המושבת דברי המקרא דבר קל אפני

He hoped to use the middle path between the Peshat and the Derash, using those Midrashim only which came nearest to the meaning of the text and which would do no violence to it. He is therefore very careful in the selection of his Midrash. If he finds a Midrash which he feels is very helpful to a true understanding of the text, he will say warmly,

1) Gen. 33²⁰

2) Gen. 37¹⁷

3) Gen. 38

אין המקרא הזה אומר אל דרשני כמו שדרשו רז"ל,

"This passage begs to be interpreted as the Rabbis interpreted it¹ or

"Here too we must rely on the Aggada². On the other hand when he thinks the Midrash is far fetched, and has no basis in the text, he will say, **יש מדרשי אגדה אבל אין**

יש בזה מדרשי אגדה אך "There are many Midrashim on this Passage but they do not give the plain meaning³, or **יש בזה מדרשי אגדה אך**

זה ישובו של מקרא "There are Midrashim on this passage but this is its meaning⁴. Once he seems to be thoroughly exasperated over a given Midrashic explanation of **וְשָׂמִי ה' לִא נִדְעָתִי** Ex. 68, and says,

אין המדרש מתשב אחז המקרא מפני כמה דברים, אחת וגו' לכן אני אומר יתשב המקרא על פשוטו דבר דבור על אפניו והדרשה תדרש.

"This Midrash does not give the correct interpretation of the text for many reasons, first etc. Therefore I say, let the Scripture be interpreted literally and rationally, and use your Derush elsewhere."

Generally Rashi distinguishes between the Peshat and the Derash. Thus the Peshat is introduced by **וְאִם בָּאתָ לְדַרְשׁוֹ כַּפְשׁוֹ, אוּלַּי פְּשׁוּטָא**, or **מִדְרַשׁ אַגְדָּה, אוּלַּי בְּדִמְיֵי אַגְדָּה** while the Derash is indicated by **וְכִינִי אַגְדָּה**, or **רְבוּתָא דְלִשָּׁן, אוּלַּי דְבַר אַחֵר, אוּלַּי**.

Very often however he gives a Midrash without saying that it is such. This he does when the text presents ^{not difficulty} and the Midrash edifies it. But in such cases it is sometimes very difficult to judge whether Rashi understood the interpretation as Derash or Peshat.

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- 1) Gen. 1₁
 - 2) Gen. 1₄
 - 3) Gen. 3₂₂
 - 4) Gen. 4₈

Illustration of Peshat and Derash:

Deut. 4³², כִּשְׂאֵל נֶגַע לִימִים רַאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לִפְנֵיךָ לִמֵּן הָיוּ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא, אֱלֹהִים אָדָם עַל הָאָרֶץ וּלְמַקְוֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד קֵצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם.

Rashi: *ולמקצה* Ask all the creatures from one end (of the world) to the other. This is the Peshat and the Derash is, Scripture teaches concerning the height of Adam which was from the earth to heaven.

Ex. 19¹⁷, Rashi:

According to the literal interpretation, at the foot of the mountain; according to the Midrashic interpretation, the mountain was unrooted and covered them like a cover.

These illustrations show clearly the difference between the Peshat and the Derash. The one gives the literal meaning, the other is purely the product of the imagination. However not all the Midrashim are as fanciful as the above. Often they carry a weighty religious or ethical truth, e.g. the Midrashic explanation brought by Rashi to Ex. 20²²,

If thou wilt make unto ^{the}an altar of stones, do not build it of hewn stones, for in lifting thy sword over it, thou hast profaned it.

Rashi: *ותחללה*, Here you learn that if you lift iron (sword) upon it

same you profane it. Because the altar is made to prolong life, and iron is made to shorten the days of man. It is therefore not proper that that which destroys should be raised above that which prolongs (life). Further because the altar brings peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven. Therefore nothing that destroys should come upon it. Behold this ^{concerning} case of *קל ומנוח*. If ^{concerning} stones which do not see, hear, or speak the Torah says 'Do not lift iron upon it' because they bring peace, how much more so then, will not evil befall the man who brings peace between man and wife, between family and family, between a man and his neighbor.

Here we have a lofty interpretation of the law prohibiting the building of the altar with iron. Whatever the scientific explanation of that law may be, the Midrash did not concern itself with that. It rather seeks to find a moral significance, and comes to the beautiful conclusion noted above. Similar Midrashim are scattered throughout the Commentary. Undoubtedly Rashi had them in mind when ^{he} spoke of using the "Aggadah which interprets the text correctly." One can readily see what a fascination they had for him.

Another form of Midrash Aggadah found frequently in Rashi is the Allegory, **רמז**, a figurative interpretation which finds in the given text an allusion to some historical person or object, or to some doctrine of faith, also the prediction of future events.

Illustration:

Ex. 42₂, Rashi:

רדו שמה: ולא נאמר לנו, רמז למאמץ ועשר שנים
שנשתעבדו למצרים כמנן רד"ו

Gen. 15₁₂,

ויהי השמש לבא ותרדמה נפלה על אברהם,
והנה אימה חשכה גדולה נפלת עליו

Rashi: רמז לצרות וחושך של גלות

A very beautiful thought is expressed in the comment on v. 10 of the same chapter. Abraham divided the oxen into pieces, (**ויבטל**) but the doves he did not. Remarks Rashi, "The nations of the world are likened to oxen, Israel to the dove. This (passage) is an indication (**רמז**) that though the nations come to an end and pass away, Israel will endure forever."

Ex. 15₁, Rashi **או יסיר**:

מכאן רמז ל תחיית המתים מן התורה

Lev. 26₁₂, Rashi **התהלכת בתוכנת**; (which clearly has reference to life on this earth, is interpreted).

אמיל עמכם בגן עדן כאחד מכם

An interesting illustration of the allegoric method is found in connection with Gen. 49₁₋₂₈, the blessing of Jacob. Thus v. 9 **גור אריה** is taken as a prophecy concerning David who will appear in Judah.

- v.9 בימי שלמה איש תחת גפרנו : לפיך כנע רבץ
- v.10 refers to the Messiah. : עד כי יבא שילה
- v.14 : he bears the yoke of the Torah like a strong ass which is laden with a heavy burden. מעל גרם

A similar allegoric method of interpretation Rashi employs throughout the poetic portions of the Pentateuch.

One could point out innumerable examples of Rashi's use of the Midrash. Berliner has said, "Man behaupten darf, dass er zwei Drittel seiner gesamten Erklärungen zum Pentateuch dem Talmud und Midrash entnommen hat."¹ Yet it would be misleading to conclude that Rashi simply embodied the Midrash as he found it. As already stated, he tried to select the best. Even then he used it to suit his needs, remolding it, adding to it, or omitting parts as he saw fit.²

But with all his care and diligent effort to give only the best, we find Midrashim that are far fetched and of an inferior type. Rashi was too faithful to the spirit of the Midrash, and this often led him to wander away from his established principle of rendering the Peshat. Ibn Ezra said of him, "Rabbi Solomon, of blessed memory, interpreted Scriptures by way of the Derash, though he thought it was the Peshat. And in his works there is not one Peshat in a thousand."³ Of course this is an exaggeration, and is characteristic of Ibn Ezra's cynicism. But there are admittedly numerous places where Rashi fails to live up to his principle, and even confuses the Derash with the Peshat. Thus e.g. Ex. 22:1 מלך מלך (ימות) he interprets (with tradition) that the king became leprous (= death), and bathed in the blood of children.

1) Berliner, Rashi Kom. u. d. Pent., Einleitung p. 451

2) Cf. Gen. 23:3 ולבנות לשרה with Tanhuma פ' וירא Ex. 20:22 with Mechilta. Sometimes Rashi quotes the Midrash partially, leaving it to the reader to look up the rest. Cf. Lev. 3:17, 10:2.

3) שפה ברורה דרך', Furth, 1839.

In Gen. 28:17, he indulges in a long speculation on קפירת הארץ, and how Mt. Moriah was torn up from its place, and went to meet Jacob.

A striking example is his comment on Gen. 14:13, לפי פשוטו, ויבא הפליט, זה פוג שפלט מן העלמה. Again, Gen. 6:3, זמני יצק צאה ועשרים שנה (lit. man's days on earth shall be limited to one hundred and twenty years, he interprets). Man shall only have one hundred and twenty years until the flood. This he terms the "clear Peshat אצולה פשוט."

A clearly Midrashic interpretation is Deut. 1:1, ^{מפני רחוק לרבה} and ensuing verses which are taken to mean, not the places where Moses addressed the Children of Israel, but the places where they sinned. (The ב in במדבר = בשרי.)

It is to Rashi's credit that he himself realized, that he had fallen short of his aim to give a literal interpretation. As Rashbam tells us in his Commentary, he regreted the fact that he did not have the opportunity to revise his work and make it conform more to the tendencies of the age in the direction of literal exegesis.¹

Pradoxical though it may sound, in this - his fault, lies Rashi's virtue. As Liber points out, "Writing before the author of the Yalkut Shimon, he revealed to his contemporaries among whom not only the masses are to be included, but owing to the rarity of books, scholars as well, a vast number of legends and traditions which have entered into the very being of the people and have been adopted as their own. Rashi not only popularized numerous Midrashim but he also preserved a number of the sources which are no longer extant, and which without him would be unknown. His Biblical commentary is thus the store house of Midrashic

1) Gen. 37:1

וגם רבינו שלמה אבי אבי מוצי' קינ' גולה שפירש תורה נביאים וכתובים נתן לב' לפרש פשוטו של מקרא, ואף אני שמואל בר מנחם חותנו דר' יודן נתנוכתי עמו ולפניו והודה לי שאילו היה לו פנאי היה צריך לצעות פדושים אחרים לפי הפשטות המתקדשים בכל יום.

literature." ¹

It is interesting to note, that during the latter period of Rashi's life the movement in opposition to Midrashic interpretation gained strong headway, and a whole line of exegetes arose who sought to interpret the text literally, among them Samuel ben Meir, Joseph Kara, Shmaya, Moses of Paris, Rabbeinu Tam. Yet remarkable to say, the commentaries of these great scholars sank into the background, and are now to be found only in compilations or rare glosses, while Rashi's Commentary gained in popularity from age to age.

כל פירושי לרפתה השלך לאשפתה
היוץ מפרשנותא וכן לזרנא

2

It was just because Rashi refrained from a purely scientific, bare grammatical interpretation, and wove into his Commentary the many fascinating Midrashim and legends,³ that it exerted such an irresistible attraction to the masses. It appealed to the heart as well as to the intellect, to the scholar and to the simple devout soul, and thus won its way into the hearts of all.

1) Liber, Rashi p.125

2) Kronberg, l.c. p.27

3) Cf. for example Gen.11²⁸. Abraham destroys the idols of his father. Gen.48⁷. Jacob buries Rachel outside of Palestine in order that she might pray for the exiles who would pass her grave in the time of Nebuzaradan.

2. Ribbui and Miut.

The idea underlying this principle is that there are no superfluous words or letters in the Torah, and if there appear such they have a special significance.

Illustration:¹

Gen. 4₁ : את קין את אחיו את הבל :

Rashi: אתם רבים הם

מלמד שתאמה נולדה עם קין ועם הבל נולדו שנים

an

Gen. 13₁₃ במהם וחמאים ורעים ורעים is a totology, but רעים = רעים and רעים = רעים

Gen. 18₇ שלוש פרים הן : Rashi: בקבוקיך רק וטוב

Gen. 37₂₄ : From the statement that the pit was empty does it not follow that there was no water there? Why then does it say there was no water in it? True, water there was none, but the pit did contain snakes and scorpions.

Additional letters.

Ex. 12₂₉ : היה ובית דינו : שיהיו לשון תוספת כמו פלוני ופלוני

Gen. 27 : Rashi, two 7s. One indicates הבא.

Gen. 13₁ : Rashi, in every other case the text does not say ה but here it does. The additional ה alludes to the five books of the Torah to be accepted by Israel. the sixth day Sivan

Ex. 13₉ : על ידכה is written "full". This indicates that they are to be worn on the left hand לדיוש בה יד שהיא כהה.

Defective Spelling.

Gen. 1₂₈ : Rashi, ו missing. Reference to dominance of male over female.

1) The words את, אך, אף and כל extend the meaning of the text, מן, אך, אף and רק limit the meaning. Gen. 24₈ יק טעם הוא
Gen. 20₅ לרבתי גם

3. Semuchin. (סמיכין)

This principle of interpretation tries to derive a certain truth from the juxtaposition of laws or events as recounted in the text.

Illustrations:

Lev. 19₃

איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמורו

Rashi: The Sabbath is connected with the fear of the father to say that although man should fear his father, yet when the latter tells him to break the Sabbath he should not obey.

Gen. 21₁ וה'פקד את שרה

Rashi: סוף פרשה זו ללמדך (This Parasha is adjoined to the prayer for Abimelech to teach) that he who prays for others, his need for the same will be answered first.

The above examples illustrate the use of Semuchin to arrive at religious or ethical deductions. But the Semuchin are not confined to this usage, e.g. Gen. 23₃

ונסמכה מיתת שרה לעקידת יצחק, לפי שקל די בשורת העקידה שנודמן בנו, לשחימה ונמנעם שלא נשחט פרה נשמות ממנה ומתה.

Deut. 10₇, Rashi: Moses adjoined this rebuke to the incident of the breaking of the Tablets to say, that the death of the righteous is as hard in the eyes of God as the day on which the Tablets were broken.

4. Harmonization.

Rashi was confronted with many difficulties which the modern exegete does not have. He of course believed in the literal inspiration of the Torah, and its transmission as a unit to Israel through the Prophet Moses. If that is true, there is indeed no room for contradiction in legislation or in the history of events. Everything in the Torah should be clear and have logical sequence. But his keen eye and critical acumen detected much that would tend to disprove this hypothesis. He found everywhere traces of contradictory legislation - contradictions in accounts. He therefore made it his duty to harmonize these contradictions wherever he found them. In the true sense of the word however, Rashi did not harmonize. The Contradictions were only apparent from his point of view. In reality they were ^{not} contradictions at all. If one understood the text clearly the contradictions would disappear. It must be kept in mind also, that Rashi was not the first to detect discrepancies. The Rabbis of the Talmud were familiar with them and tried to explain them away. He followed in their footsteps, adopted their explanations and whenever he detected new difficulties, he tried to explain them in his own way.

A very familiar example is the case of the difference in the wording of the sixth commandment as given in Exodus and in Deuteronomy. If God spoke the ten commandments at one time how shall we account for this difference? The fact was that the Rabbis could not account for it. It was a miracle like the other miracles, so they said.

לכול ושומר לדבור אחד נאמר "The words שומר and לכול were said in one expression."

Rashi quotes this explanation to Ex. 20₈ and Deut. 5₁₂.

Ex. 12₁₅ contains the law שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו while in Deut. 16₈ we read ששת ימים תאכל מצות. Says Rashi "למדנו על שבעת ימים".

שאינו חובה לאכול מצה ובלבד שלא יאכל חמץ.

In other words the first is the general law which would exhort all to eat Matzo every day of Pesach. The second however, tells us that it is not a duty to eat Matzo on the seventh day. And by the principle of (the general and the particular *פרט וכלל*), just as the seventh day is voluntary so are the other six days voluntary.

A Rabbinic principle of harmonization to which Rashi resorts very frequently, is that expressed in the phrase, *אין מוקדם ומאחר בתורה* "There is no fixed order for the sequence of the laws in the Torah."¹

Illustration:

Num. 9¹ contains the law concerning Pesach and is purported as having been given on the first month of the second year after the exodus, while the opening chapter of Numbers tells of God's command to Moses to number the Children of Isreal, given on the second month of the same year. Logically, Num. 9¹ ought to precede Num. 1. says Rashi, from this you learn that there is no fixed order in the Torah.

Ex. 16³³. Moses tells Aaron to take some of the Manna and place it before God. Aaron does so and puts the Manna before the Eduth. But there was no Eduth *קדוה* or tent of God as yet. Rashi therefore says "this passage was not said until after the Ohel Moed was erected, but it is written here in the Parasha dealing with the Manna.

Biblical critics are generally agreed that Gen. 1 - 2 are two parallel accounts of creation (so called E and J) Rashi finds no difficulty in harmonizing them. Thus Gen. 2¹⁹ which speaks of living creatures as being created from the earth and Gen. 1² which speaks of living forms as created from the water are harmonized as being created from the alluvial mud. Similarly with regard to the creation of Adam and Eve.

1) Gen. 6³ , Ex. 14¹⁹ , Num. 9¹ , Lev. 8¹

From Gen. 1²⁷ one would be led to believe that man and woman were created at the same time. But in Gen. 2²² Eve is created later from Adam's rib. Rashi points out that in the first instance Scripture states the general fact that Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day and in the second instance gives the details of creation.

A few more examples will illustrate the nature of the difficulties that confronted Rashi and how he overcame them.

Ex. 9¹ וּבְרֵחַם בְּאֶדָם: The cattle as well as the people are smitten with boils. But does it not say above (v. 6.) that all the cattle had died? The above reference is to the cattle in the field. Only they died. Those people who feared God brought their cattle in. It was these that were smitten.

Ex. 6³ לֹא נִדְעָתִי: God tells Moses that he did not make his name known to the patriarchs. But we know from the preceding events that the patriarchs did know Him by name. See Rashi,

לֹא נִכְרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּמִדַּת אֲמִיתוּת שְׁלִי שְׁעָלֶיהָ נִקְרָא

שְׁעֵי ה'... נִגְאֵן לְאֲמֹת דְּבָרֵי . Thus God did reveal

himself as יְהוָה to the patriarchs, but not in the full sense, that is, they did not know Him as He really was, because He did not fulfil His promises.

Ex. 12⁴⁰: Here we learn that Israel's sojourn in Egypt was 430 years. But figuring the years from the entrance into Egypt up to the exodus the time is much shorter. According to Rashi we must reckon the sojourn from the birth of Isaac, which in round numbers equals 430 years. (This conclusion is arrived at through a Midrashic interpretation of the passage,

מִשְׁחֵיהָ לֹא זָרַע . כִּי אֵרָא יְהוָה זָרַע which is taken to mean

These "harmonizations" will not satisfy the modern Critic, but they were well enough for Rashi who was not worried with "Higher Criticism" and "Codes".

CHAPTER V
TALMUDIC PRECEPTS

If Rashi fell short in his endeavor to free himself from the current method of interpretation, and to give a literal interpretation of the Pentateuch, he was however much more successful in his second aim, to present those Talmudic precepts which as he believed had their origin in the laws of Moses. Rashi was of the firm opinion that both the oral law *תורה שבעל פה* as well as the written, *תורה שבכתב* were given to Israel at Sinai. It only required a keen understanding of the written law to deduce from it the oral. Rashi's profound knowledge of the Talmud enabled him to point out these deductions with great ease. His commentary abounds in them, and as such might be called an encyclopedia of Rabbinic law.

The wide range of the laws cited by Rashi is seen in the fine points of casuistry regarding *טומאה*, discussed in his comment on Lev. 11³⁴, and the prohibition against suicide that he finds in Gen. 9⁵. The laws regarding *שחיטה* are indicated in Deut. 12 ; the prohibition against eating the limb of a living animal *אברמן חיי* in Gen. 9⁴. Num. 16⁹ shows that the practice of *Duchan* *דוכן* dates back to Korach. Ex. 16²⁹, is the basis for the Rabbinic law concerning the "Four ells" on the Sabbath. Gen. 24⁵⁷ contains the provision that a woman is not to be married against her consent, and Gen. 15³ that if she is childless during a period of ten years her husband may marry another. In Deut. 11²¹ Rashi finds the belief in resurrection indicated.

ethics.

Interspersed between the Halachic dissertations and the general interpretations there are gems of Rabbinic ethics which embrace all sides of life. In bringing these before the reader Rashi has not only given us an insight into the grandeur of Rabbinic ethics, but an insight into the nobility of his own soul as well. For only a soul as lofty as his would have selected them. Rashi is the finest type of the Medieval Jew who combined piety, that is strict observance of Jewish practice with ethical conduct.

Some of the striking but not unfamiliar truths found in his Commentary are as follows:

- Lev. 19¹⁵ Judge thy neighbor on the scale of merit **זכות לך חבירך**
- Ex. 17⁹ Let the honor of thy pupil **יהי כבוד תלמידך חביב עליך כשלך**
be as dear to thee as thine own.
- Lev. 19¹⁷ Do not put a man to shame in public. **לא תלבין את פניו ברח"ק**
- Gen. 38²⁶ It is better that a man be thrown into
a fiery furnace rather than that **נח לו לאדם שיפלהו**
he put his neighbor to shame in public. **לכבשן האש ולא ילבין פני חבירו ברח"ק**
- Gen. 7¹ One should speak only part of a man's **אומרים מקצת שבחו של אדם**
praise in his presence and the whole of it behind him. **בפניו וכל הפסוק שני**
- Gen. 24⁵² From this we learn that one should give thanks upon hearing
glad tidings. **מכאן שמודים על בשורה טובה**
- Gen. 18¹⁹ He who raises a righteous son is as if he will never die! **כל המעמיד בן צדיק כאילו אינו מת**
- Gen. 30¹ He who has no children is likened to a corpse. **שאין לו בנים חשוב כמות**
- Ex. 16⁶ The Torah teaches one should not eat meat to satiety. **למדה תורה דרך ארץ שאין אוכלין בשר לשובע**
- Gen. 18⁸ One should not depart from custom. **לא ישנה אדם מן המנהג**
- Ex. 12⁶ The representative of a man is like himself. **שלוחו של אדם כמותו**

- Deut. 22⁸ A good deed brings on another good deed. מצוה גוררת מצוה
- 19¹ If a man transgress a light commandment he will ultimately transgress an important one. עבר אדם על מצוה קלה סופו לעבור על מצוה חשובה
- 23¹⁴ A transgression brings on another transgression. עבירה גוררת עבירה
- Deut. 25¹ Peace does not come out of strife. אין שלום יוצא מתוך מריבה
- 20¹⁹ Do not throw up against thy neighbor a blemish which thou thyself possesseth. מום שבך אל תאמר לחברך
- Gen. 3⁵ Every craftsman hates his competitors. כל אמן שונא את בני אומותו
- Ex. 16²⁸ A common proverb - משל הדיוט הוא
- The good suffer shame because of the bad. בחדי הוצא לך כדבא
- Ex. 40^{14:19} The poor man is likened to a corpse. העני חשוב כמת
- Gen. 15⁸ A common proverb - משל הדיוט, עבד מלך מלך
- The servant of a king is king. הדיבן בשחמוד וישתמוך לך
- Cleave unto a ruler and people will bow down to you.
- Gen. 21²¹ Throw up a rock into the air and it will come down to the ground. היינו דאמרי אינשי: זלוק חומרא לאוריה אעיקרה קאי
- Num. 22¹² A proverb -
- They say to the bee, We do not want your honey or your sting. אומרים לצדעה לא מדובשיך ולא מעוקליך

Theology.

Consciously, perhaps more often unconsciously ^{Ra} Rashi gave expression to many doctrines and dogmas which form a well defined system of theology. Thus his Commentary is not only a Hebrew grammar, a codex of Rabbinic law and ethics, but a catechism as well. A detailed study of the Commentary from this point of view would offer an interesting insight into Rabbinic theology. This is beyond the scope of our thesis. However, it may be well to call attention to some of the ideas which Rashi emphasized and in which he undoubtedly shared.

God.

The conception of God is transcendental but is at the same time also personal¹. Though His abode is in the heavens, He is interested in the affairs of men. At times the God conception borders upon ^{animate} animism. Thus e.g. in commenting on אלהים אשר אלהים Ex. 3¹⁴, Moses argues with God when he is told to say to the people in the name of God, "I will be with Israel in their future troubles as I am with them at the present." Shall I tell them of their future troubles also, asks Moses? God accepts the correction and changes the statement Moses is to make.

However, Rashi tries to guard the reader against anthropomorphic conception of God. Thus e.g. in his comment on Ex. 19¹⁸ where God is represented as descending upon Mt. Sinai and the mountain smoking as with the smoke of a furnace Rashi says that עשן הכרשן is a euphemistic expression, 'for the purpose of making the ear hear what it can understand.' Scripture gives to men a sign which is familiar to them e.g. the expression "Like

1) Ex. 818

a roaring lion --- ¹ Scripture compares Him to a lion but we liken him to His creatures in order to make the ear understand what it is able to hear. Similarly Deut.29¹⁹ יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת הָאָדָם Rashi: Through anger the body becomes hot and smoke issues forth from the nose. Although this cannot be said of God Scripture lets the ear hear in a way that it is accustomed to hear and able to understand.

So also Gen. 1²⁶ בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵינוּ is not to be taken literally but בְּצַלְמֵנוּ is to be understood as a certain ideal form בְּדִפּוּס שְׁלֵנוּ, and כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ in the sense to understand and to be wise לְהִבָּיֵן וְלִהְיוֹת. Unity.

God is one. Certain passages might lead one to believe the contrary, as in the case of Gen.1²⁶ where it says, נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם 'let us make man'. Says Rashi, The use of the plural might give an Epicurus occasion to rebel. But this is no sign of pluralism in God, as seen from the following verse,

וַיִּבְרָא He created, and not וַיִּבְרְאוּ they created. Again, in Gen.35⁷ God is spoken of in the plural אֱלֹהִים but it is only in the case of אֱלֹהִים and not in the other names of God that the plural is used. Gen.2¹⁸ tells us, "It is not good that man should be alone." God created a mate for Adam to guard against dualism. People should not say God above is one power and man below another.

Omniscience. Cf. Gen.6⁸, Ex.12¹³, Num.22⁹.

Names of God.

The two attributes of God which are often repeated and alluded to are יְהוָה² expressed in מִדַּת הַחַסֵּד and אֱלֹהִים expressed in מִדַּת הַדִּין.

Ex. 6² נָאֵן לְשֵׁלֶם שֹׁכֵר מוֹב : אֵל ה'

Ex. 6² דְּבַר אֱתוֹ מִשְׁפָּט : וַיִּדְבֵּר אֱלֹהִים

God combines justice and mercy.³

¹ Hosea 11.

² Gen.1¹

³ Ex.15³, Gen. 1

Angelology.

There are repeated references to the angels, (generally from Midrashic sources) in fact there is a whole system of angelology. The angels, created on the second day, constitute a source of heavenly court with which God consults.¹ They are also the messengers to carry out his will. The angels have no fixed names but are called after the tasks assigned them.² No two angels do the same work. Each has his specific tasks,³ while there are separate angels for Palestine and חוץ לארץ.⁴ Every nation has its לשון in heaven.⁵

As there are angels so there are demons.⁶ Satan plays a prominent role. He is the angel of opposition, challenges and hinders the good.⁷ In Gen. 4²⁴ there is the superstitious belief that Satan works for one's harm in time of danger.⁸

Free Will.

The principle of the freedom of the will is laid down in connection with the passage Deut. 10¹² "What does the Lord thy God ask of thee but to fear him" Says Rashi, Our Rabbis inferred from this that everything is in the power of God except the fear of God הכל בידי שמים חוץ מפחד ש'י. The principle of freedom of will is contradicted in the case of Pharaoh, where it says in Ex. 7³ ואני אקשה "and I will harden his heart." Rashi ingeniously gets around this difficulty by saying that God would harden Pharaoh's heart after he saw that he rebelled against Him and would not repent; also that God brings sufferings to other nations in order that Israel may learn thereby.

1) Gen. 21¹⁷, Ex. 12¹⁹.

2) Gen. 32⁵⁰.

3) Gen. 18², 19¹.

4) Gen. 28¹², 32².

5) Deut. 2³¹.

6) Gen. 22¹³, 21¹.

7) Gen. 6¹⁹.

8) In this connection may be mentioned the superstition of the "Evil eye" Gen. 21¹⁴, Sarah gave Ishmael an עין רעה. Gen. 4¹⁵, Jacob's sons fear the "Evil Eye."

Retribution.

Upright conduct is rewarded and vice versa. Belief in the future world עולם הבא and also in the לזיתן which is there¹, salted and prepared for the righteous. Rashi emphasizes the principle of מדה כנגד מדה ² Gen. 11⁷ קבה : מדה כנגד מדה. They said, 'Come let us build' and He punished them and said, 'Come let us go down'.

Ex. 14²⁵. Isreal was thrown into the water therefore the Egyptians are destroyed by water. The Egyptians had hardened their hearts so God treated them hard.³

A question of divine justice is raised in the case of Ex. 11⁵ where the first born of the cattle die along with the first born of the Egyptians. Why did the cattle have to die? Because the Egyptians worshipped them and כשהקב"ה נפרע מן האומה נפרע מאלהיה ⁴ Similarly the Nile was smitten because it was worshiped.⁵

Prophecy.

A good definition of prophecy is given in connection with Ex. 7¹

כל לשון נבואה אדם הנוכח ומשמיע לעם דברי תוכחות

But the patriarchs were prophets in the sense that they had supernatural intuition into things, נאצלם רוח הקודש ⁶. In the case of non-Jews, the divine spirit rests upon them only at night as with Bilam and Laban.⁷

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- 1) Gen. 1²¹.
 - 2) Gen. 11⁷.
 - 3) Ex. 14²⁵.
 - 4) Ex. 11⁵.
 - 5) Ex. 7¹⁷.
 - 6) Gen. ³⁷32.
 - 7) Num. 22⁸.

Commandments.

The commandments easily classify themselves into,

a) ethical laws,¹ מצוות: דברים שאילו לא נכתבו ראויין הם להצטוות
כגון גזל ושפיכת דמים

b) dogmas,² חוקים: דברים שאינן אלא גזרת המלך בשום מקום --
כגון לבישת כלאים ואכילת חזיר

Imitatio Dei is set up as the ideal,³ and the lofty principle established that service of God is a matter of the heart and not of outward show.⁴

1) Gen. 26⁵

2) Ex. 15²⁶; Lev. 18⁴

3) Deut. 26¹¹ 22

4) Lev. 1¹⁷

CHAPTER VI
THE INFLUENCE OF RASHI

Rashi's influence through the eight hundred and more years that have elapsed since he lived and worked, and our own day is inestimable. How profound it has been may be seen from the fact that his Commentaries have become inseparably bound up with the Talmud and the Bible. A Talmud text or an edition of the Pentateuch without the Commentary of "Rashi" is an unheard of thing.² The first Hebrew book printed whose date we know definitely was Rashi's Commentary to the Pentateuch, Reggio 1475, 10th of Adar 5237¹. Rashi's Commentaries spread quickly. From Troyes they were carried by the students to the other centers of learning in Lotharinga and Germany, and thence they found their way to Spain, to Africa and even to the Orient². Sixty years after the death of Rashi, Ibn Ezra found the latter's Commentary to the Bible in Rome, and was very much provoked that it had won such recognition.³ "Hardly any book," says Berliner, "of those that were written after the completion of the Talmud received so much attention by scribes, commentators and editors as did this Rashi's Commentary from the time it was produced to this day."⁴

Rashi was held in high esteem not only by his French contemporaries but by succeeding generations and in all lands. Menachem ben Zerah a Spanish Rabbi of the fourteenth century writes⁵:

"Rabbi Solomon wrote a commentary to the Talmud in clear and brief lang-

1) Berliner, Vortrag p. 19

2) Liber, Rashi, p. 84

3) Berliner, Beiträge p. 14

4) Berliner, Rashi Kom. u. d. Bent. Hekdamah, p. 1X.

5) Bacher, Jahr. f. jüdi. Gesh. u. Lit., p. 102

gauge in which he excelled all his predecessors. Without him the path of the Babylonian Talmud would have been forgotten in Israel." Rashi was indeed the inspiration to a whole school of French exegetes, the Tosafists who followed in his footsteps of sound exegesis, and made his Commentary to the Talmud the basis for their "additions" *תוספות*.

What the Commentary to the Talmud was for the study of Rabbinic literature, the Commentary to the Pentateuch was for the study of the Holy Scriptures. It opened a new avenue of approach, and gave fresh impulse to the study of the Bible. More than one hundred and thirty super-commentaries were written to it,¹ while those who refer to its pages are without number. To mention just a few of the most prominent; Rashbam who made very extensive use of his grandfather's work, though he sometimes speaks harshly of his mistakes;² Nachmanides sights Rashi in almost every verse. Ibn. Ezra and Kimchi also bring certain of his explanations in their work.³ Abraham son of Mainonides used the Commentary, while the Rabad *רבינו אלעזר* the opponent of Mainonides speaks well of them. The Commentary to the Pentateuch found favor with the greatest Rabbis and the youngest students. Preachers used it for sermons. Teachers used it as text books for introduction to Rabbinic works. Everybody studied it.³ So important a place did

1) Berliner, Rashi, Kom. u.d. Pent. Hakdamah p.IX.

2) Kromberg, R. als Exeget, p.23

3) Berliner, l.c. This universal popularity also accounts for the many confusions in the text. Everybody took the liberty to deal with Rashi as if it were his own work. Mistakes also crept in because of misreading of letters, and false sentence divisions. Often comments of his interpreters were inserted through ignorance, as Rashi's own words. The Commentary also suffered at the hands of the censors who struck out parts. Hakdamah p.xii - xiii

it win for itself, that the Maharshall ^{מהרש"ל} (Solomon Luria) says that if in the course of study during the week there were no time to read both the Targum and Rashi, he would read Rashi! It is therefore not an exaggeration to say with Berliner, "Raschi hat vor Ignoranz geschützt, hat den Am Haas Retz verhütet."²

Rashi's popularity is also evidenced by the many phrases that have found their way from his works into the Jewish vernacular; e.g. to designate the hard lot of poverty ^{קניי חסרב כמות} - ^{מחור רעפערענץ} feigned piety⁴ - ^{חזיר כשר פיסעל} The curse of a bad deed is that it is followed by another⁵ ^{עבירה גוררת עבירה} hard heartedness⁶ - ^{מדת סדום} satisfaction⁶ - ^{איזה עשיר השומח בחלקו} ^{איס רשעי גיבלין פופולר?} He who has remained good despite bad company says⁶ -

אם לבן גרתי ותריגה נצלות שמרתי

Two hundred years after Rashi's death (1306) began the expulsion of the Jews, which by the end of the fourteenth century had destroyed the old Jewish community in northern France. In Troyes all traces of his activity were lost but his works found a greater circle, the whole diaspora, his name was immortalized in the hearts of world Jewry.

"גדול המפרשים מאיר עיני הגולה!"

Greatest of commentators, enlightener of the eyes of the Exile! ⁷ His pen saved the treasures of the Past and inspired the generations of the future. His spirit shed rays of light and warmth upon the gloomy centuries of Israel's existence. In the words of Eliezer ben Nathan (),

1) Berliner, Raschi Kom. u.d. Pent. Hakdamah p.14

2) Berliner, Vortrag

3) Ex. 40:19 ; 4) Gen. 26:34 ; 5) Deut. 23:14

6) Berliner, Aus dem deutschen Jüden in Mittelalter, p.53.

7) Weiss, l.c. p.285.

incorrect 87 4:19

מימיו אנו שותים ומפיו אנו חיים אשר אין חוקר ותקן אונים לתורה,
 שפתותיו שמרו דעת, ותורה נתבקשה ונתחדשה ונדרשה מפיו,
 תורת אמת היתה בפיו בשלום ובמישור הלך והעמיד
 לעולם רגל שלישי והגדיל תורה והאדיר.

"Of his waters we drink and by his words we live; he searched out
 examined, and disclosed the meaning of the Torah; his lips kept know-
 ledge and the law was sought in his mouth; even as it was rejuvenated
 by him; the law of truth was in his mouth; he walked in peace and up-
 rightness; he placed the law upon a firm foundation and made it great
 and glorious."¹

 1) Schloessinger, l.c. p.245

Note: Rashi's influence extended also into Christian circles.
 Pellicanus translated the entire Bible commentary into Latin.
 Others translated parts. Nicholas de Lyra. (1340) upon whom
 Luther depended for his German translation, used Rashi exten-
 sively. Zung. Zeit. f. d. Wiss. d. Jud.; Berliner, Vortrag p.16: