

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Chayei Soroh

25 Cheshvan, 5779 – November 3, 2018

Compiled from the works of
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Chayei Soroh

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Rashi in His Own Words

בראשית כ"ג, ט': ויתן לי את מערת המכפלה אשר לו אשר בקצה שדהו בכסף מלא ויתננה לי בתוככם לאחוזת קבר:
רש"י ד"ה בכסף מלא: אשלם כל שווייה, וכן דוד אמר לארונה (דברי הימים א' כ"א, כ"ד) בכסף מלא:

Bereishis 23:9: That he may give me the Machpelah Cave which belongs to him, which is at the end of his field; let him give it to me for a full price, in your midst for burial property."

Rashi Heading – for a full price: I will pay its full value. So too did Dovid say to Aravnoh¹, "for the full price."

Synopsis

At the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, Chayei Soroh, we are told of the passing of our matriarch Soroh. After Avrohom arose from eulogizing his wife, he approached the children of Chais, and requested that they give him a burial plot for Soroh. They responded that he could have any plot that he wishes. He answered that he only wanted one specific plot; he wanted the cave that was on the field which belonged to Ephron ben Tzochar. Additionally, he wanted to pay the full price for it; he refused to accept any presents. The word which the Torah uses for the full price is "בכסף מלא." Literally translated, this means with "full silver – money." Rashi explains that Avrohom was saying that "I will pay its full value." He quotes an example from I Divrei Hayomim (I Chronicles); there we are told that when King Dovid bought the land for the Bais Hamikdosh, he used the same expression while speaking to Aravnoh.

We need to understand what Rashi is adding by telling us that "full money" means the full value. That is obviously the simple meaning of the phrase.

The explanation is that at first glance, the adjective "full" seems to modify the word "silver – money." In other words, Avrohom seems to be saying that the coins with which he pays will be complete, i.e. will not be lacking any silver. Therefore, Rashi comes to explain that "full" modifies the sale, and not the money itself.

1. I Divrei Hayomim 21:24.

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Rashi's Explanation

At the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, Chayei Soroh, we are told of the passing of our matriarch Soroh. After Avrohom rose from eulogizing his wife, he approached the children of Chais, and requested that they give him a burial plot for Soroh. Their response was², "Listen to us, my lord; you are a prince of G-d in our midst. In the choicest of our graves bury your dead. None of us will withhold his grave from you, (to have in order) to bury your dead." He answered that he only wanted one specific plot³. "If you want that I bury my dead from before me, listen to me and ask Ephron the son of Tzochar to give me the Machpelah Cave which belongs to him. It is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me for a full price in your midst for burial property." The word which the Torah uses for the full price is "בכסף מלא." Literally translated, this means with "full silver – money."

Rashi cites the words from the verse "for a full price," and explains that "I will pay its full value. So too, Dovid say to Aravnoh, 'for the full price.'" The verse there is discussing Dovid's purchase of the threshing floor which belonged to Aravnoh the Yevusi, to be used as the place of the altar of the Bais Hamikdosh (which would later be built by Dovid's son, King Shlomoh). There too, Aravnoh wished to give it to Dovid as a present, however Dovid insisted on paying the full price. We are told the same story in the end of II Shmuel. One difference between the two versions of the story is that in Divrei Hayomim it uses the expression "with full silver," identical to the expression which is used here. In II Shmuel, it says⁴ "I will buy it from you for a price."

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

We need to understand what Rashi is adding by telling us that "full money" means the full value. That is obviously the simple meaning of the phrase. Additionally, what does Rashi add by citing another verse? In Divrei Hayomim it uses the same exact words with the same exact meaning as here.

It is a well-known rule in understanding Rashi, that he only explains the words which he quotes from the verse. If he is only explaining the words "for a full price," why does he explain that Avrohom said that "*I will pay* its full price?" It would have sufficed to have said "its full price."

2. Our Parshah, Bereishis 23:6.

3. Our Parshah, Bereishis 23:8-9.

4. II Shmuel 24:24.

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We also need to understand why Rashi, who is always so concise, writes "so did Dovid say to Aravnoh, 'for the full price.'" He could have written, as he often does, that "likewise with Dovid, 'for the full price.'"

The Explanation

Rashi is coming to negate a possible misconception. We could think that the adjective "full" modifies the noun "silver." At that time the value of a coin was based on the weight of the silver it contained. We might have thought that Avrohom was saying that he would pay with full coins; the coins would not be lacking in their weight. Therefore, Rashi explains that "full" modifies the field and the sale; "I will pay its full value."

What forces Rashi to explain it in this manner? Avrohom's words follow the words of the children of Chais. They told him that they would give him the burial plot he desired for free. Therefore, Rashi tells us that his response to them was that "I will pay its full price," meaning that he would not accept it for free. That is why Rashi added the words "I will pay." He is making it clear that Avrohom was responding to the words of the children of Chais. Telling them the sort of coins with which he would pay, would not be a response to their offer.

However, despite the difficulty, one might still think that Avrohom *is* telling them with what sort of coins he would pay them. By telling them what sort of coins he would use, it is understood that he would pay them! In order to negate that understanding of the verse, Rashi adds King Dovid's use of the same words in Divrei Hayomim. Rashi is not merely quoting another instance where the same phrase is used. There it is clear that the meaning of the words is that Dovid would not accept the threshing floor for free. It clearly says there in the very same verse that⁵ "I will not take what is yours for the Lord, and offer up burnt offerings for free." There it is perfectly clear that "the full price" is meant.

That is also the reason for Rashi's seeming verbosity, "So did Dovid say to Aravnoh, 'for the full price.'" There, King Dovid refused to accept Aravnoh's threshing floor as a gift. Had he done so, Aravnoh would still have some connection to it. The place where all sacrifices would be offered to Hashem would still be *Aravnoh's* threshing floor. That was not at all acceptable. Therefore, Dovid insisted on buying it from him for the full price, in order that he no longer would have any connection to it whatsoever.

5. I Divrei Hayomim 21:24.

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Likewise, Avrohom insisted on paying in full for Ephron ben Tzochar's cave. The place where the patriarchs and matriarchs would be buried could have no connection to Ephron or the children of Chais whatsoever.

A Halachic Lesson from Rashi

As we have discussed many times, despite the fact that Rashi is focusing on Peshat, his commentary also alludes to wondrous teachings in all aspects of Torah. Through Rashi's comments here, we can answer a question in Halachah, Jewish law.

The Talmud⁶ derives the teaching that real estate can be acquired with cash from the verse in the Prophets⁷ "Men shall buy fields for money ..." There in the Talmud, the commentary of Tosafos asks why this law is not derived from a much earlier verse, which is in the Torah itself. We should be able to learn it from our instance of Avrohom buying the cave from Ephron for money. The answer given there is that Avrohom purchased the land from Ephron, a gentile. The only method of acquisition for a gentile is with money. Perhaps this would not apply to a Jew.

There is an additional reason that we cannot learn this from our verse. The cave, and for that matter the entire land of Israel, already belonged to Avrohom. G-d told him⁸, "I will give this land to your progeny." The entire purpose of buying the land was in order to ensure that Ephron had no claim to any connection to the land whatsoever. In reality, there was no need for him to purchase the land.

The same is true of King Dovid. He had already conquered all of Yerushalayim. The threshing floor belonged to him. The sole reason that he insisted on paying the full price, was in order to assure that Aravnoh had no connection to the site of the altar.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

There is also a deeper, mystical lesson contained in Rashi's comments. The Zohar says⁹ that Mitzvos may not be done in a cheap manner, or for free. A Mitzvah performed in such a manner does not draw down a spirit of holiness. Rather one must use all of his effort, and pay the full price when it comes to performing Mitzvos. That is the reason that Rashi tells us that both Avrohom and Dovid paid the full price.

6. See Kiddushin 26, a.

7. Yirmiyahu 32:44.

8. Parshas Lech Lecho, Bereishis 12:7. See also Rashi on our Parshah, Bereishis 23:4.

9. See Zohar Volume 2, Page 128, a.

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The lesson for us is that we must strive to elevate through Torah and Mitzvos the place in which we find ourselves. Toward this goal, we must apply all of our strength and resources.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Soroh, 5729 and 5719)

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the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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**IN HONOR OF
Chaim and Aiden Oded שיקורי Morris**

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**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיקורי Morris**

* * *

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER
Mrs. Brocha bas Reb Tzvi Nechemiah Hacoheן ע"ה Cohen
Passed away on 8 Shevat, 5778
May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Mr. Sholom Moshe Hacoheן ben Tzivia ש' Cohen
For a complete and speedy recovery**

* * *

**DEDICATED BY
Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar ש' Mars**

*

May he merit to be a Chossid, a Yerei Shomayim and a Lamdon

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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נפטרה ביום ח' שבט, ה'תשע"ח

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

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נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מאריס

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