

בס"ד

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Vayaishev

23 Kislev, 5780 – December 21, 2019

Compiled from the works of  
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
**Parshas Vayaishev**  
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**Rashi in His Own Words**

בראשית ל"ז, י"א: וַיִּקְנֶאוּ בּוֹ אֶחָיו וְאָבְיו שְׁמַר אֶת הַדְּבָר:

רש"י ד"ה שמר את הדבר: היה ממתין ומצפה מתי יבא, וכן (ישעיה כ"ו, ב') שומר אמונים וכן (איוב י"ד, ט"ז) לא תשמור על חטאתי, לא תמתין:

**Bereishis 37:11:** So, his brothers envied him, but his father awaited the matter.

**Rashi Heading - awaited the matter:** He was waiting and looking forward in expectation of when it (the fulfillment of the dream) would come. Similarly,<sup>1</sup> “awaiting (שומר) the realization (of Hashem's promise),” and<sup>2</sup> “You do not wait (תשמור) for my sin.” (In other words, this means that) You do not wait.

**Synopsis**

This week's Torah portion, Vayaishev, tells us of two dreams which Yosef had. The first implied that his brothers would bow down to him<sup>3</sup>. The second made it clear that in addition to his brothers, his parents would also bow down to him<sup>4</sup>. He described both dreams to his brothers. He also described these dreams to his father, Yaakov, in his brothers' presence. His father believed that these dreams would come to pass. The Torah concludes this story by telling us that his brothers envied him, but his father waited for his son's dreams to come true.

The verb which the Torah uses for "waited" is quite unusual in that context. The Hebrew word "Shomar – שמר" usually means to guard. In this instance, however, Rashi tells us that it means that "he was waiting and looking forward in expectation of when it (i.e., the fulfillment of the dream) would come." Rashi goes further and cites two proofs from scripture that this verb can have the meaning of waiting. The first proof which he quotes is from the book of Yeshaya. "Awaiting (שומר) the realization (of Hashem's promise)." The second is from the book of Iyov, “You do not wait (תשמור) for my sin.” Why does Rashi need to cite two different proofs? Either one of them would have shown that the word "Shomar - שמר" can mean waited!

When one is waiting for something, he wants it to happen as soon as possible. He is anxious for it to happen. However, in our verse, the Torah placed the word "Es - את" between the words "waited" and "for the matter." The name “Es” has no real translation. It is a grammatical tool that we often used to indicate a direct

1. Yeshaya 26:2.

2. Iyov 14:16.

3. Our Parshah, Bereishis 37:5 – 7.

4. Our Parshah, Bereishis 37:9.

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object. Yet, here we have something for which Yaakov is yearning, and yet we separate the words "waiting" and "the matter." The proof text from Yeshaya has no separation between the word "wait," and that for which we are waiting. However, it discusses waiting for something positive, namely the redemption. The verse from Iyov is talking about something which is not favorable, namely sin. It does have a separator. From these two verses, we see that the word "Shomar - שמר" can be translated "to wait" regardless of whether or not it refers to something positive or not.

### Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah Portion, Vayaishev, the Torah tells us of two dreams which Yosef had. The first dream implied that his brothers would bow down to him. His second dream meant that in addition to his brothers, his parents would also bow down to him. He described them to his brothers. He then told his father, Yaakov, of them in his brothers' presence<sup>5</sup>, and his father rebuked him.

Why did his father rebuke him? His father *did* believe that Hashem would fulfill Yosef's dreams. Instead, he rebuked Yosef for bringing hatred upon himself (see Rashi's comments to footnote 5). Our verse states that "his brothers envied him, but his father waited. The Hebrew verb which the Torah uses, שמר, usually means that he guarded. Rashi cites the words from this verse "his father waited for the matter," and comments that that "he was waiting and looking forward to when it, meaning the fulfillment of Yosef's dreams, would come. Rashi cites two prooftexts for this use of this verb. Firstly, the prophet writes 'waiting - שומר for the realization (of Hashem's promise to bring the redemption).' It is also written in scripture 'Do not wait - תשמור for my sin,' meaning do not wait."

### Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

It seems clear that Rashi is only explaining one word from the verse upon which he is commenting, the term "Shomar - שמר." Although in the overwhelming majority of places that we use this verb, it means guarded, he is telling us that here it means waiting. We know that Rashi is exceptionally particular and precise with the words that he uses in his commentary. He is equally exact with the words which he cites in the headings of his comments. If he is only explaining the term "waited," why does he also quote the words "his father (waited) for the matter" in the heading of his comments?

Furthermore, Rashi seems to be showing us that here, the verb שמר is used by the Torah to mean "waited." Therefore, he cites proof that it can have this meaning. Why does he need to mention two tests, one from Yeshaya and one from Iyov? One would have sufficed.

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5. Our Parshah, Bereishis 37:10.

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When Rashi does cite his second proof from Iyov, “Do not wait for my sin,” he follows it by clarifying that it means “do not wait.” That the meaning of “not waiting for my sin” is “do not wait” is so evident that we would have understood it ourselves, even had Rashi said nothing. Furthermore, when Rashi cites his first proof from the verse in Yeshaya, he does not add any explanation whatsoever. Why does he need to explain this regarding his citation from Iyov?

### The Explanation

The reason that Rashi is not satisfied with citing the verse from Yeshaya and cites proof from Iyov as well is as follows. If one is waiting for a particular thing, he feels close and connected to that which he awaits. The proof which Rashi cites from Yeshaya makes this clear. We, the Jewish nation, are waiting for Hashem to fulfill His promise and finally redeem us from exile. Therefore, the prophet writes שומר אמונים and not את אמונים. The Hebrew word “Es - את” does not have an actual translation. Rather, grammatically, it indicates a direct object<sup>6</sup>. Here, because we are longing for and expecting the redemption immediately, the Prophet writes the verse without this word. No word – nothing, comes between “waiting – שומר,” and “the realization of G-d's promise – אמונים.” Hence, we see that the verb "Shomer - שומר," when it is not followed by the word "Es - את" indicates something which one expects.

However, this leaves us with a problem. In our verse, it says that Yosef's “father awaited the matter,” which the Torah writes in Hebrew "ואביו שמר את הדבר." The word “Es - את” is inserted after the word “waited.” Accordingly, it is challenging to say שמר means waited (i.e., was expecting) because if that was the case, the terms “waited” and the “matter” should not be separated!

It is for this reason that Rashi is not satisfied with the proof from Yeshaya. From Yeshaya alone, we might think that in our verse, "Shomer – שמר” cannot mean “waited.” The word “Shomer,” as it appears in our verse, is not immediately followed by the term “matter.” The word "Es - את" separates the two words. Therefore, Rashi brings additional proof from Iyov, “לא תשמור על חטאתי” - Do not wait for my sin.” Here the meaning is waiting, even though there is the word על meaning “upon” in the sense of “for” (“Do not wait on, meaning for my sin.”) separating the words “wait” and “sin.” From this, we understand that even with the name “Es - את” between שמר and דבר, it can still have the meaning of waiting for and expecting something.

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6. The word does serve another function as well. When the Sages study Scripture and derive all of its hidden teachings, the word את has the implication of “and,” it demonstrates that we are to include something other than what is expressly written. For example, we find in Tractate Kesuvos 103a, that when the Torah tells us to honor our father and mother, it inserts the word "את - Es" before both "your father" and "your mother." It writes כבוד את אביך ואת אמך. The Rabbis learn from this that in addition to honoring our parents we must honor our older siblings as well.

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That is why Rashi includes the words “his father (waited) for the matter” in the heading of his comments. Indeed, he is only explaining the concept “Shomar – שמר.” Nevertheless, he is emphasizing a critical point. Although the name “Es - את” separates between “Shomar - Waited - שמר” and “Hadovor - the Matter – הדבר” nevertheless, the term “Shomar - שמר” here has the meaning of expecting something.

There is still difficulty remaining. It appears that the proof from Iyov is closer to our verse than that from Yeshaya. Accordingly, why did Rashi cite evidence from Yeshaya? Rashi could have sufficed with only citing the verse from Iyov!

The answer is that there are different sorts of waiting. The verb “to wait” can be used to mean something to which the person is looking forward. He is anxiously waiting for it to take place. That is the case in our verse, where Yaakov was impatiently waiting, “when will Yosef’s dream finally be fulfilled.” Therefore, Rashi says that he was “waiting and looking forward to” the time that his son’s dream would come to pass. The same is true regarding the proof from Yeshaya; the Jewish people are anxiously awaiting the Final Redemption. However, “waiting” can also imply something which one does not wish to occur, as is the case with the verse which Rashi cites from Iyov, “Do not wait for my sin.” Iyov was saying that Hashem is (G-d forbid) not anxiously waiting for the opportunity to punish him. On the contrary, G-d always expects the person to do Teshuvah and thereby avoid the punishment altogether.

That is why Rashi finds it necessary to cite two verses. The first verse (from Yeshaya) indicates that the word “Shomar – שמר” means waiting in the sense of anticipating something for which one anxiously awaits. The verse from Iyov demonstrates that “Shomar – שמר” means waiting, even for something to which one does not look forward. Additionally, it indicates that this is the case even with a word separating between the “waiting” and that for which one is waiting. That is why he clarifies after citing the verse from Iyov that the meaning of the word is “wait.” He is emphasizing that even though the word “upon” comes between the two, it changes nothing.

### **A Deeper Explanation of Rashi**

We have discussed many times that although the fact that Hashem caused us to be “exiled from our land” because of “our sins,<sup>7</sup>” there is a deeper purpose to our exile. Namely, it allows us to reach a level that is even higher than the level which we had attained before the exile. By withstanding the temptations inherent in exile, we can achieve a level that is even higher than our stature at the time that the Holy Temple was standing. Exile allows us to reach the level needed for the ultimate redemption.

What this means is that although chronologically exile precedes redemption, nevertheless, the real purpose of exile was to attain redemption. Therefore, in terms of its intent and use, redemption precedes exile. Rashi

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7. This expression is based on the festival liturgy.

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alludes to this in his commentary by first citing the verse “waiting for the realization (of Hashem’s promise to bring the redemption),” and then the verse “do not wait for my sin,” sin which is the cause of exile.

The verse we are explaining discusses that for which Yaakov was waiting, namely the fulfillment of Yosef’s dream. Yosef’s dream had to take place to fulfill the prophecy that<sup>8</sup> “your children will be strangers in a strange land.” Being “strangers in a strange land” is a reference to our exile in Egypt, which was the root of every future Golus.

Rashi is telling us that each exile, which stemmed from our exile in Egypt, came as a result of our sins, “do not wait for my sin.” However, the first explanation quoted by Rashi “waiting for the realization (of Hashem’s promise to bring the redemption).”

The fact that Golus is a punishment for sin only explains how it takes place. However, the intent of exile, even before there was any sin, was to empower us to return to the land. Not only that, but G-d made it possible that<sup>9</sup> “a great congregation shall return there.” Moreover<sup>10</sup>, “G-d will *expand* your boundaries...and He will give you the *entire* land,” “<sup>11</sup>from the river of Egypt until the great river, the Euphrates... the Kenites ... “with the future redemption through our righteous Moshiach, who will come and redeem us immediately.

*(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayaishev 5727)*

**I hope that you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.**

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8. Parshas Lech Lecho, Bereishis 15:13. Hashem told Avrohom that his descendants would be strangers in a strange land (they would experience the Egyptian Exile), and that following that they would be redeemed with great wealth.

9. Yirmiyahu 31:7.

10. Parshas Shoftim, Devorim 19:8.

11. Parshas Lech Lecho, Bereishis 15:18 – 21.

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Mr. **Sholom Moshe** ben Reb **Shlomo Meir** Hacoheן ע"ה **Cohen**

Passed away on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 13 Shevat, 5779

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

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**RABBI SHMUEL AND RIFKA** שיקי **MENDELSON**

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