

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Shabbos Chol Hamoed
Sukkos

20 Tishrei, 5783 – October 15, 2022

Compiled from the works of
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Shabbos Chol Hamoed Sukkos¹**

Likkutei Sichos Volume 21, Pages 232 – 237

Rashi in His Own Words

שמות ל"ג, כ"ג: וְהִסַּרְתִּי אֶת כְּפִי וְנִרְאִיתָ אֶת אַחֲרַי וּפְנֵי לֹא יֵרְאוּ:

רש"י ד"ה ורִאִיתָ אֶת אַחֲרַי: הִרְאָהוּ קֶשֶׁר שֶׁל תְּפִילִין:

Shemos 33:23: Then I will remove My hand, and you will see My back, but My face shall not be seen.

Rashi Heading - You will see My back: He showed him the knot of (His) Tefillin.

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Siso, we find that Moshe asks Hashem to² "Please show me Your glory. "To this, Hashem responds,³ "You will not be able to see My face. "Several verses later, G-d explains⁴ that "You will see My back, but My face will not be seen." Rashi, citing the words from the verse "You will see my back," explains that Hashem "showed him the knot of (His) Tefillin."

Rashi is explaining Peshat, the simple meaning of the Torah. Why does he find it necessary to explain what is meant by Hashem showing Moshe His back? The beginning student has already encountered several anthropomorphisms. The Torah mentions G-d's "back"; however, we know Hashem has no image or form. There, this cannot be Rashi's problem. Even the total beginner understands that this is an allegory. The same verse discusses Hashem's face, and Rashi does not comment on that. There are easier ways to explain the metaphorical meaning of Hashem's "back" (so to speak). We don't need to say that it is a reference to the "knot of G-d's Tefillin. If the question that bothers Rashi is how we can attribute a physical quality to Hashem, nothing is gained by saying that Hashem's "back" refers to His "Tefillin!"

Based on the above questions, the explanation is that Rashi is not bothered by the Torah mentioning G-d's face or His back; that is a typical sort of expression in the Torah which is understood by all. Rather Rashi is bothered by a different question. Moshe requests to see G-d's "glory." Hashem answers, "You shall see My back, but my face shall not be seen." G-d says⁵, "I will let all My goodness pass before you; I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I will favor when I wish to favor" How does this answer Moshe's request that Hashem shows him his glory? Rashi answers this question by saying⁶, "The time has come that you will see some

1 Since this Shabbos is one of the intermediate days of Sukkos; there is a special Torah reading. It is found in Parshas Tiso, Shemos 33:12-26. We are there presenting an explanation of a Rashi in this Torah reading.

2. Ibid, Shemos 33:18.

3. Ibid, Shemos 33:20.

4. Ibid, Shemos 33:23.

5. Shemos 33:19.

6. *Ibid.*

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of My glory that I will permit you to see because I want and I need to teach you *the order of prayer*. I will (therefore) let all of the attributes of My goodness pass before you while you are hidden in a cave. I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you to teach you the procedure for begging for compassion (i.e., praying). According to this procedure, (during) which you (will) see Me enwrapped and proclaiming the Thirteen Attributes (of Mercy), teach the Israelites to do likewise." Following this, Hashem says⁷, "You will not be able to see My face ...," which Rashi explains means "even when I let all of My goodness pass before you"

It follows that what it says in our verse "and you shall see My back" is not the beginning of a new statement by G-d. Rather, it is the continuation of the previous verses. Moshe will see the back of G-d "enwrapped (in a Tallis) and praying." However, Moshe will *only* see Hashem's back. How can this represent seeing Hashem's glory? If G-d is wrapped in a Tallis, He is not visible! This is especially difficult since a Tallis is not a garment made of expensive, precious material for "glory and beauty," as were the vestments worn by the Kohanim – priests. Usually, a Tallis is a simple woolen garment!

This is why Rashi explains that Hashem showed Moshe the knot of His Tefillin. The child who is beginning his studies knows that at times the one who leads the congregation in prayer only wears a Tallis, and at times he also wears Tefillin. The head Tefillin forms a crown, which indeed demonstrates glory, and the knot on the back of the head Tefillin is what creates the crown. Hence, the beginner understands from Rashi that Moshe will see Hashem's glory.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Siso, we find two things happening simultaneously. G-d teaches Moshe how to pray on behalf of the Jewish people, and Moshe asks Hashem to "Please show me Your glory." Hashem responds, "You will not be able to see My face." Several verses later, G-d concludes, "You will see My back, but My face will not be seen." Rashi, citing the words from the verse "You will see my back," explains that Hashem "showed him the knot of (His) Tefillin."

Seemingly, Rashi is answering a question for the beginning Torah student. We know that Hashem has neither a form nor an image. How can the Torah say that G-d will show Moshe His back? Therefore, Rashi explains that what was meant was that He would show Moshe the knot of His Tefillin.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Rashi is explaining Peshat, the simple meaning of the Torah. Why does he find it necessary to explain what is meant by Hashem showing Moshe His back? Why does it require an explanation? We cannot say that Rashi is bothered by the use of anthropomorphism. Although Hashem has no image or form, the beginning student

7. Ibid, Shemos 33:20.

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has already come across many physical characteristics attributed to G-d throughout the Torah. The beginning student understands that these are all symbolic. In the verse we are discussing, Hashem's face is mentioned, and Rashi offers no comment because none is needed.

If Rashi is looking for an allegorical explanation of Hashem's "back," there are many more straightforward ways to explain it than the "knot of G-d's Tefillin." The face symbolizes one's essence, and one's back, on the other hand, symbolizes more superficial aspects of one's personality. However, we have no idea what the knot of Tefillin symbolizes.

Furthermore, Rashi includes in the heading of his comments the words "you will see." In his explanation, he includes the words "I will show you." Why is this so? We know that Rashi is precise both in the terms he uses for his headings and in his commentary. Yet it seems that he is only explaining the words "your back," not the words "you will see," or "I will show you."

The Explanation

The explanation is that Rashi is not bothered by the Torah mentioning G-d's face or His back. That is a typical sort of expression in the Torah and is understood by all. Rather Rashi is bothered by a different question. Moshe asks Hashem to "Show me Your glory." Hashem responds, "You shall see My back, but my face shall not be seen." In between the question and answer, G-d says⁸, "I will let all My goodness pass before you; I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I will favor whom I wish to favor ...". What possible connection does this have to Moshe's request that Hashem shows him his glory? Rashi answers this question by saying⁹, "The time has come that you will see some of My glory that I will permit you to see because I want and I need to teach you *the order of prayer*. I will (therefore) let all the attributes of My goodness pass before you while you are hidden in a cave. I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you to teach you the procedure for begging for compassion (i.e., praying). According to this procedure, you (will) see Me enwrapped (in a Tallis) and proclaiming the Thirteen Attributes (of Mercy), teach the Jews to do likewise." Following this, Hashem says¹⁰, "You will not be able to see My face ...," which Rashi explains means "even when I let all of My goodness pass before you"

It follows that when our verse says, "and you shall see My back," it is not the beginning of a new subject but rather the continuation of the previous verses. Moshe will see the back of G-d "enwrapped (in a Tallis) and praying."

However, this only engenders another question. Moshe will see Hashem "conducting services, praying while enwrapped with a Tallis" only after G-d passes. In other words, Moshe will see Him from behind. That

8. Shemos 33:19.

9. See Rashi's comments to Shemos 33:19.

10. Shemos 33:20.

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being the case, how can we say that Moshe will see Hashem's glory? If He is wrapped in a Tallis, He is not visible! This is an even more significant question because all that Moshe will see is Hashem's Tallis! A Tallis is not usually made from expensive, precious materials. Generally, it is a simple woolen garment!

This is why Rashi explains that Hashem showed Moshe the knot of His Tefillin. The beginning student knows that at times the one who leads the congregation in prayer only wears a Tallis, such as on Shabbos and festivals. During the week, he wears Tefillin in addition to the Tallis. The Tefillin on his head form a crown, demonstrating Hashem's glory. It's not the *straps* of the Tefillin that form the crown. The straps hang down in front of the one who wears them. Instead, the knot on the back of the head Tefillin forms the crown. The beginning student is also aware that most of the time, the head Tefillin is not visible from behind, and the Tallis usually covers them. This is why Rashi tells us that Hashem pointedly "showed" Moshe the knot of His Tefillin.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

It is quite apparent that because these two subjects are being discussed simultaneously, they must be related to each other. There is a connection between Moshe's request to see G-d's glory and G-d teaching Moshe how to pray on behalf of the Jews. Beseeching forgiveness for the Jewish people must be essential to seeing Hashem's glory, and this is the case even if we can only see his glory "from behind."

To understand this connection, we must first answer a different question. Why was it so crucial for Hashem to be "wearing" a Tallis while reciting the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy? One would think that reciting these attributes, with or without a Tallis, is what matters. After all, it is the prayer that brings about forgiveness.

One of the answers to this question is that one of the causes of sin is forgetfulness, which is also the cause of negative, impure forces within the world. In the realm of holiness, our Sages tell us that¹¹ "There is no forgetfulness before Your holy throne."

Why is this so? What is the correlation between memory and holiness? The answer is that it is the nature of every Jew to believe that¹² "In the beginning, Hashem created the heaven and the earth." Furthermore, it is a part of the nature of every Jew to believe that G-d is creating the world every moment. This being the case, how is it possible for a Jew to ever sin? The firm belief that Hashem created one this second should prevent him from sinning! There may be circumstances that sometimes cause him to sin. Nonetheless, he is aware that G-d also created those circumstances at this moment. The answer is that it is only possible for a Jew to sin if this "slips his mind" temporarily.

What does that have to do with a Tallis and Tzitzis - Fringes¹³? Not only a Tallis, but as we see from Rashi, Tefillin are also a part of the equation. The answer is that both help us remember all of Hashem's commandments.

11. See Talmud Berachos 32, b and the Laws of Torah Study by the Alter Rebbe, Chapter 2, and Section 10.

12. Bereishis 1:1.

13. Bamidbar 15:37 – 41.

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Regarding Tzitzis, it says¹⁴, "and when you see it, you will remember all of the commandments of the Lord to perform them." Furthermore, it says¹⁵, "So that you remember and perform all of my commandments."

Regarding Tefillin, it says¹⁶, "It shall be to you as a sign upon your hand and as a remembrance between your eyes." Once the Tallis and the Tefillin remove the cause of the sin, the forgetfulness, the result is also removed. The Jewish Nation is forgiven, and Moshiach will lead us to our redemption.

(Adapted from a talk given on Motzo'ai Shabbos Parshas Tiso 5739)

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

Click here to dedicate a week, a month, or a year of the Rashi of the Week.

You can find us on the web at www.RebbeTeachesRashi.org.

You can find our blog [here](#).

14. Bamidbar 15:39.

15. Bamidbar 15:40.

16. Shemos 13:9.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF

**Dr. Mindel Rivka (Muriel) bas Reb Menachem Mendel Shlomo ע"ה
Stitt**

Passed away on Shabbat Parshat Lech Lecha, 10 Mar-Cheshvan, 5782
May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שיהיו

* * *

IN HONOR OF

The Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"

Chaim and Aiden Oded שיהיו

Morris

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיהיו**

Morris

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Mrs. Esther שתחי' Sharabani

May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

*

DEDICATED BY HER SON

Mr. Gershon (Geri) שי' Bentov

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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לעילוי נשמת

מרת מינדל רבקה בת ר' מנחם מענדל שלמה ע"ה

סתית

נפטרה ש"ק פרשת לך לך, יו"ד מר-חשון תשפ"ב

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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נדבת בני משפחתה שיחיו

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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 וחי' מושקא שיחיו

מאריס

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מרת אסתר שתחי' שרבני

לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות עד ביאת גואל צדק
ומתוך בריאות הנכונה ולשנת ברכה והצלחה בגו"ר

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