

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Bo

3 Shevat, 5785 – February 1, 2025

Compiled from the works of
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Bo**

Likkutei Sichos Volume 31, Pages 61 – 68

Rashi in His Own Words

שמות י"ג - י"ד: וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁאַלְךָ בְּנֶךְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה זֶה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּהִצְיֹאֲנוּ ה' מֵמִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים:
רש"י ד"ה כי ישאלך בנך מחר: יש מחר שהוא עכשיו, ויש מחר שהוא לאחר זמן, כגון זה, וכגון (יהושע כ"ב, כ"ד) מחר יאמרו בניכם
לבנינו, דבני גד ובני ראובן:

Shemos 13:14: It will happen when your son asks you tomorrow, saying, "What is this?" you will say to him, "With a mighty hand did the Lord take us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Rashi Heading - if your son asks you tomorrow: Sometimes the Hebrew word "מָחָר – Mochor" means "now" (meaning tomorrow). Sometimes the word "מָחָר – Mochor" means "at a later time," such as it does here, and such as "In time to come 'מָחָר - Mochor,' your children might say to our children," which refers to the children of Gad and the children of Reuvain.

Synopsis

Our Torah portion, Bo, tells us of the great exodus of the Jewish nation from Egypt. After describing all of the miracles with which Hashem removed us from Egypt, the Torah describes the commandments we need to observe to commemorate these miracles. The Torah then says that¹ "... when your son asks you tomorrow (using the Hebrew word 'מָחָר – Mochor'), saying 'What is this?' you will say to him, 'With a mighty hand did the Lord take us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'" The Hebrew word "מָחָר – Mochor" is commonly used to mean tomorrow. However, Rashi, quoting the Midrash, says that at times this word is used to mean "now" (tomorrow), and at times it is used to mean "in the future." Rashi then explains that in our verse it means "in the future." He then quotes a verse from Yehoshua where the word "Mochor" is used similarly.

Rashi is never verbose. We all know that the word "מָחָר – Mochor" generally means tomorrow. Why does Rashi require such a lengthy introduction to his comments? Why does he begin his explanation by telling us that sometimes the definition of the word is "tomorrow," something well-known? Rashi's entire point is that the word is not to be explained by its literal, ordinary meaning here!

The explanation is that Rashi is speaking to the absolute beginner. He teaches the simple reason of the Torah, Peshat. However, when he quotes our Sages, he *also* uses their words in their most straightforward sense. This is true even if that was not the exact intent of the Sages. When the Midrash said that sometimes the

1. Our Parshah, Shemos 13:14.

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term "מֹחֹר – Mochor" means now, it intended that it does not refer to a future point in time. However, Rashi is saying something different. He is telling us that here, the word "מֹחֹר – Mochor" actually refers to any time after the event that we are discussing takes place. That is true, even if it is today.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Bo, the Torah tells us how G-d redeemed us from Egypt. Hashem commanded us to perform many precepts to commemorate all the miracles He performed for us. The Torah tells us that² "It will happen when your son asks you tomorrow, saying, 'What is this?' you will say to him, 'With a mighty hand did Hashem take us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'" The Torah uses the Hebrew word "מֹחֹר – Mochor," which is usually translated as tomorrow³. However, Rashi cites the words from the verse "if your son asks you tomorrow" and explains that "sometimes the Hebrew word 'מֹחֹר – Mochor' means 'now.' Sometimes, the word 'מֹחֹר – Mochor' means at a later time, such as it does here. It also means at a later time in the verse,⁴ 'In time to come 'מֹחֹר - Mochor,' your children might say to our children,' which refers to the children of Gad and the children of Reuvain."

Rashi seems to be telling us that the Torah does not say that our children will ask about the rituals we perform the next day. Instead, the Torah is discussing our children's questions in future times. Rashi's source for this *appears* to be the Midrash. The Midrash⁵ says that "at times the word 'מֹחֹר – Mochor' means 'now,' and at other times the word 'מֹחֹר – Mochor' means at a later time. Our verse, 'Tomorrow your son will ask what this,' refers to later. As stated earlier⁶, 'This sign will come about tomorrow' means tomorrow. 'In time to come, your children might say to our children,' which refers to a later time."

Various supercommentaries (commentaries of Rashi) explain why he had no reason to mention the proof cited by the Midrash that the word "מֹחֹר – Mochor" means tomorrow literally⁷. Firstly, that is the simple translation of the word. Secondly, Rashi's point here is to explain that the term "מֹחֹר – Mochor" in our verse is

2. Ibid, ibid., ibid.

3. There are actually different explanations given by various commentaries as to the meaning of the word "Mochor." The Radak writes in his Sefer Shoroshim, that the words meaning is "the day which will come after the day in which one currently finds himself; i.e. literally tomorrow. There are also those that explain it as referring not to the near future, but rather to the distant future." The ibn Ezra explains that the Hebrew word "מֹחֹר – Mochor" is a contraction of "מֵאַחֵר," meaning afterwards. He takes this to mean the day after today.

4. Yehoshua 22:24. The tribes of Reuvain and Gad asked Moshe for permission to remain on the east side of the Jordan. See Parshas Matos, Bamidbar Chapter 32 and Yehoshua Chapter 22.

5. See the Mechilta on our verse. See also the Midrash Tanchumah for our Parshah, Chapter 13.

6. Parshas Vo'eiro, Shemos 8:19. This was written regarding the plague of a mixture of wild beasts, snakes and scorpions.

7. See for example Nachalas Yaakov on our verse.

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not meant to be translated literally.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

We need to understand why Rashi prefaces his comments on our verse by saying that "sometimes the Hebrew word 'מָחֹר – Mochor' means 'now.'" Rashi's entire point is to explain that "Mochor" does not mean now here. He is explaining that here, it refers to the future. That being the case, why does Rashi begin his comments with such a lengthy explanation; "sometimes the Hebrew word 'מָחֹר – Mochor' means 'now?'"

The Explanation

We will understand this by explaining that Rashi wrote his commentary for a beginning student. As the Sages of the Mishnah teach us regarding the proper curriculum for Torah study⁸, "At age five, one begins studying Chumash." This being the case, Rashi's style is effortless and straightforward. For one thing, his goal is to teach Peshat, meaning the simple meaning of each verse. Additionally, even when he cites a teaching from the Sages, it is intended to be understood on its most superficial level. This is even true if that understanding contradicts the meaning the Sages intended to convey.

That is the case here. The Rabbis said that "sometimes the Hebrew word 'מָחֹר – Mochor' means 'now.'" They intended that it means tomorrow, i.e., the day after today. They wished to convey that the word implies the near future. However, when Rashi uses the expression, he means to use the word *now* literally. In other words, Rashi says that "Mochor" can even mean today, any time after a particular event occurs. It does not imply that the sun must first set and then rise again to qualify as "Mochor."

Based on this, we can understand what the Torah is saying. If your son does not understand the reason for the Mitzvos, why should he wait until tomorrow to ask? Why doesn't he ask immediately? That is why Rashi begins his commentary by saying, "Sometimes the word 'Mochor' means now, and sometimes it means later. It's not limited to meaning tomorrow. It can refer to the very same day after something took place. It can also refer to something which will happen many generations later.

This will clarify the answer to yet another question. Why did the Torah need to use the word "Mochor"? It could have said, "When your son asks you what this is," What difference can it possibly make *when* he asks you?

The explanation is that a child may ask different types of questions. There are questions that he asks because he is a child, and he lacks the knowledge and background to understand "what is this." Rashi explains in our verse that there are also different levels of children. He cites the words "what is this" and describes it as follows: This is (the question of) the simple child, who does not know how to pose his question in-depth, and

8. See Pirkei Avos at the end of Chapter 5.

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asks a general question; 'What is this?' Elsewhere, the Torah says⁹, 'What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments ...?' This is the wise son's question. The Torah spoke regarding four sons: the wicked one¹⁰, the son who does not understand enough to ask¹¹, the one who asks a general question, and a son who asks wisely.

That is why the Torah adds the word "Mochor." His question is not only prompted by the fact that he is your son; he is a child who has not yet had the opportunity to learn. Instead, his question also stems from the fact that it is "Mochor." He lives in a different era and another generation. He asks his question because he did not experience the exodus from Egypt, which is the reason for his question.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

Based on the above, we can understand more deeply why Rashi offers both definitions of "Mochor." He tells us that "Mochor" can either mean "now" or "at a later time" to allude to something more profound. Each meaning of "Mochor" speaks to a different type of child.

Each child is "Mochor," i.e., from the next generation. However, there is a child that falls into the category that Rashi refers to as "sometimes the Hebrew word מְחֹר – Mochor means *now*." He is indeed a child and a member of the next generation. However, he is living the life of *now*, the same sort of life that his father does. He is not separate from his father; his being is Torah and Mitzvos. He is a direct continuation of his father. We must strive to answer his questions, and he can only maintain his service to Hashem with joy by answering his questions.

However, there is also a child that is in the category that Rashi refers to as "sometimes the Hebrew word מְחֹר – Mochor means *at a later time*." He is part of a *new* generation and era and belongs to a generation¹² "which did not know Yosef." His questions do not merely stem from a lack of knowledge. Instead, his questions are derived from the fact that the life of Torah and Mitzvos is strange to him. Such a life is not suited to how he is *currently* living.

Rashi teaches us that we must answer this child's questions because he is *your* child! It is your responsibility and your *merit* to answer his questions. We must draw the generation that lives "at a later time" under the Shechinah's wings¹³.

9. Parshas Vo'eschanan, Devorim 6:20.

10. Our Parshah, Shemos 12:26.

11. Ibid, ibid. 13:8.

12. Parshas Shemos, Shemos 1:8. See also the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vayaishev, 5748. There the Rebbe connects this idea to our generation in particular. His predecessor, whose first name was Yosef, expended tremendous effort to work with this generation. By Divine Providence, he passed on at this very time; the Shabbos when Parshas Bo was read (10 Shevat, 5750).

13. See Midrash Tehillim Chapters 46 and 110.

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We will establish G-d's Army by occupying ourselves with all Jewish children¹⁴. We will now merit complete and true redemption through our righteous Moshiach. We will witness the fulfillment of the prophecy that¹⁵ "just as in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show him wonders" speedily in our days!

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Bo, 5730)

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

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

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

14. Our Parshah, Shemos 12:41.

15. Micha 7:15.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

the Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim, Aiden Oded, and Zacharya Matan** שיקחי 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** שיקחי
Morris

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Mr. **Sholom Dovid** Hacohe**n Mankes**

Passed away on 11 Teves, 5776

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HIS FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. **Yonatan Itsik** Hacohe**n and Shaindel Miriam** שיקחי **Mankes**

* * *

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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לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם"

חיים, עזן עודד וזכרי' מתן שיחיו

מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו

מאריס

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לעילוי נשמת

ר' שלום דוד בן ר' יצחק הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום י"א טבת ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י משפחתו

ר' יונתן איציק הכהן וזוגתו מרת שיינדל מרים שיחיו מנקס

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לזכות

מרת אסתר שתח' שרבני

לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות עד ביאת גואל צדק

ומתוך בריאות הנכונה ולשנת ברכה והצלחה בגו"ר

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נדפס ע"י בנה

ר' גרשון שי' בן טוב