

“Did ArtScroll Censor Rashi?” ***Response to Prof. Marc B. Shapiro***

By: YISRAEL ISSER ZVI HERCZEG

Prof. Shapiro’s typically erudite and comprehensive rejoinder forces me to correct some of the points I made in my article and to clarify others. He is correct in that I confused the Venice 1517 edition with that of 1524. ArtScroll has only two early editions that support their version of the text by their account, and it is not a “tossup,” as I called it. Furthermore, he is correct in stating that *Mizrachi* concludes that Rashi does not agree with the Rashba, as I said he did.¹

Regarding the accuracy of the Leipzig manuscript: Prof. Grossman’s points about the Leipzig manuscript do more than merely add complexity to the matter under discussion. They provide a compelling argument for the Leipzig manuscript’s accuracy. It is on the basis of that manuscript that Koren printed only the shorter version of the text of Rashi to *Bereishis* 18:22 to the exclusion of all other versions. Anybody who wishes to maintain that the Munich manuscript is more authoritative must show that there is some internal weakness in Prof. Grossman’s reasoning, as Prof. Touito attempted to do. Prof. Shapiro says about the shorter text of Rashi that it is understandable that the words in question would be deleted by copyists who found them problematic. It is hard to say this about a manuscript of Rashi that was copied directly from one seen and approved by one of his prime disciples.

In *Chachmei Tzarfas HaRishonim* and in *Rashi*, Prof. Grossman writes that it was conventional for medieval copyists to insert remarks of their own or from other sources in the manuscripts they were copying, and that Rabbi Machir, the copyist of the Leipzig manuscript, likely did so himself, as well as making corrections. But deleting from the text being copied is quite another matter. Nowhere in his books does Prof. Grossman suggest that Rabbi Machir did such a thing. On the contrary,

¹ As for Prof. Shapiro’s note 19, actually, it is not likely that I looked at the *sefarim* he mentions.

Yisrael Isser Zvi Herczeg is the translator of the ArtScroll *Rashi*.

he shows that Rabbi Machir respected the integrity of the text he copied from.²

Regarding how to read the text of the Munich manuscript and its variants: In my article, I said that the words לכתוב כן in the popular version of the text should be read *lakasw kein* (“[in which our Rabbis inverted] the verse this way”), in which case Rashi is not stating that the Rabbis did any writing regarding the verse. Prof. Shapiro says that this reading of Rashi is ungrammatical but does not explain why. As he does not have this objection to my reading of the Munich version which has לכתוב כאן rather than לכתוב כן, it must be that his objection has to do with the specific word כן. But Prof. Shapiro should not be bothered by any irregularity that derives from that word. He is of the opinion that the Munich manuscript is the most reliable version of Rashi to Chumash. It is certainly the most reliable version of the longer text of the comment we are discussing. The Munich manuscript reads כאן where the popular version reads כן. Thus, the word כן is likely a corruption of כאן.

In an email to me, Ze’ev Atlas suggests that the Munich version of the text, אשר הפכוהו רבותינו לכתוב כאן, means “that our Rabbis changed it to what is written here.” This is a sound reading. If Rashi wrote these words, and if he had in mind what Ze’ev Atlas proposes, Rashi is saying that the Rabbis altered the text. However, Rashi’s commentaries to *Iyov* and the Talmud indicate that this was not the case.

Regarding the meaning of Rashi to *Iyov* 32:3: Rashi to that verse says, “זה אחד מן המקומות שתקנו סופרים את לשון הכתב”³ “This is one of the places in which scribes corrected the language of Scripture.” Prof. Shapiro sees this as clear proof that Rashi takes *tikkun soferim* literally. But Rashi’s words lend themselves to another interpretation.

Tikkun soferim means literally “correction of scribes.” That sounds like scribes actually correcting texts. It works in a looser sense only if whoever uses it takes for granted that his audience or readership will not take it literally, presumably because they believe that people cannot change the text of the Torah. They would understand it as meaning that Chazal taught us on the basis of tradition to view the text as if it were corrected. Rashba, Tosafos Rid, and others find such an interpretation

² See *Chachmei Tzarfat HaRishonim*, pp. 188-189. Prof. Grossman says that Rabbeinu Shemayah did delete words from Rashi’s text, but he was not a copyist and he was authorized by Rashi himself to do so.

³ This is the text of Rashi as it appears in the Machon Ofek edition of Rashi to *Iyov* (5760). Other editions differ slightly.

of *tikkun soferim* plausible. If Rashi is of like mind, then when he speaks of “the scribes” or “our Rabbis”⁴ doing the correcting, he can be taken the same way. He would presume that the reader takes for granted that scribes didn’t correct the written text, but that Chazal corrected our understanding or reading of the text by teaching us to interpret it or read it as if they did.

Viewing Rashi’s isolated remark in its broader context supports this understanding. *Iyov* 32:2-3 reads:

ויחר אף אליהוא בן ברכאל הבוזי ממשפחת רם באיוב חרה אפו על צדקו נפשו מאלקים. ובשלת רעיו חרה אפו על אשר לא מצאו מענה וירשעו את איוב.
Then the wrath of Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned against Iyov. His wrath burned for his having considered himself more just than God. And his wrath burned against his three companions for not having found a response, and they condemned Iyov.

Rashi comments:

וירשעו את איוב. זה אחד מן המקומות שתקנו סופרים את לשון הכתב וירשעו את כלפי מעלה בשתיקתם היה לו לומר אלא שכינה הכת' וכן וימירו את כבודם כבודי הוא אלא שכינה הכת' וכן ואל אראה ברעתי ברעתם הוא אלא שכינה הכתוב וכן הרבה בספרי ובמסורת הגדולה.
AND THEY CONDEMNED IYOV. This is one of the places in which scribes corrected the language of Scripture. It should have written “and they condemned” directed toward God [rather than toward Iyov, having condemned Him] through their silence [in the face of Iyov’s complaints], but the verse changed the wording. Likewise, [when Scripture says,] “They exchanged their honor [for the image of an ox that eats grass]” (*Tebillim* 106:20), it is “My Honor” [which is being spoken of]. But the verse changed the wording. Likewise, [when Scripture says,] “And let me not see my evil” (*Bamidbar* 11:15), it refers to *their* evil. But the verse changed

⁴ Rashi to *II Melachim* 18:27 says that “our Rabbis corrected it to change the wording to nice language” (ורבותינו תקנו לכנותו לשון נאה) referring to the way we are to read the text, but not to how the text is written. (The text of Rashi as quoted here appears in *Mikraos Gedolos HaKeser*. The standard Lublin and Warsaw editions of *Mikraos Gedolos* both read “ורבותינו פירשו, Our Rabbis explained.” Based on manuscripts, this version of the text is almost certainly incorrect, and it is understandable that *Mikraos Gedolos HaKeser* would omit it.)

the wording.⁵ There are likewise many examples [of this type of changing wording] in *Sifrei* (*Behaalosecha* 26) and in *Masores HaGedolah*.

Rashi here uses כינה הכתוב, “the verse changed the wording,” interchangeably with *tikkun soferim*. Hence, *tikkun soferim* is something the verse actually does, not the scribes.

Prof. Shapiro refers to an essay by Prof. Yeshayah Maori on Rashi’s understanding of *tikkun soferim* that appears in *Netivot LeDavid: Jubilee Volume for David Weiss Halivni* (Orhot Press, Jerusalem, 2004). Prof. Maori points out several places where Rashi uses variations of the term *tikkun soferim* interchangeably with כינה הכתוב, “the verse changed the wording.” As we have mentioned, the active party in “the verse changed the wording” is “the verse,” not “the scribes” or “the Rabbis.” Prof. Maori recognizes that on the face of it, this indicates that it is not “the scribes” but “the verse” that is doing things to the words themselves. This conflicts with his earlier assertion that Rashi takes *tikkun soferim* literally. Thus he says that כינה הכתוב refers to what the verse does after the Rabbis or scribes emended it: “the verse speaks euphemistically” rather than “the verse changed the wording.”

Prof. Maori introduces this interpretation by saying that it is “not forced” (p. 104; “בלא דוחק”). Further on he says that it is not forced much (p. 106; “לא בדוחק רב”). But Rashi’s words elsewhere indicate that it is incorrect.

A few verses after the comment to which Prof. Shapiro refers, Rashi gives a clear definition of the term כינוי. *Iyov* 32:21 reads: “אל נא אשא פני” “I will not now show favor to any man, nor alter my words for any person.” Rashi comments: “לא אשנה דברי” “לא אכנה” להחליפו לכבודו כגון שכתוב למעלה וירשיעו את איוב זהו כינוי המשנה את הדיבור “The words לא אכנה” “לא אשנה דברי” mean, I will not change my word by making substitution for it for the sake of his honor. For example, [we find such substitution in] that which is written above, “They condemned Iyov” (32:3) [where the verse uses ‘Iyov’ out of respect to God]. This is what the term כינוי means: one who changes that which is spoken (i.e., one who alters his wording) for the sake of honor. [Elihu son of Barachel here says,] I would not even do this, for I would rebuke him unequivocally.”

⁵ Moshe prayed that he not see the evil that would befall Israel. But the verse altered the expected wording so as not to mention the prospect of Israel’s suffering explicitly.

means] he expounds a passage about forbidden relations as if it were speaking euphemistically, and he says, “The verse did not speak literally of forbidden relations. Rather, the verse changed the wording and called it (i.e., its real subject) ‘forbidden relations.’ [He claims that the verse actually speaks of] one who reveals something shameful about his father or something shameful about his mother in public.” The term *כינוי* means inverting, in that he (one who uses *כינוי*) inverts what he says for praise or for disparagement. There are many examples [of this type of changing wording] in the words of the Sages in *Sifrei (Behaalosecha 26)* in the passage on the verse “gather unto Me seventy men” (*Bamidbar 11:16*).

[One example is,] “ואל אראה ברעתי”, “And let me not see my evil” (*Bamidbar 11:15*). It should have said, “And let me not see *their* evil,” but the verse changed the wording.

Similarly, we find “וימירו את כבודם בתבנית שור אוכל עשב”, “They exchanged their honor for the image of an ox that eats grass” (*Tehillim 106:20*). It should have said “My Honor,” but the verse changed the wording.

Here, too, in defining *כינוי* Rashi speaks of someone who intentionally expresses himself with words that do not convey the actual meaning, as does “the one who changes wording with regard to forbidden relations” of whom the *mishnah* speaks. When we apply this definition to *כינה הכתוב*, we conclude that “the verse” is responsible for the change of wording.

Along the same lines, we find Rash’s comment in *Shevuos 36a*. The *gemara* says, “יתב רב כהנא קמיה דרב יהודה וקאמר הא מתניתין כדתנן א”ל כנה”, “Rav Kahana sat before Rav Yehudah and recited this *mishnah* as it was taught [with the text including “He shall strike you”]. He said to him, ‘Change the wording [so that it should not sound as if you are cursing me].’” Rashi comments: “אמר ליה רב יהודה כנה הפוך דבריך כנגד אחרים אמור. יכהו וכן יכהם שלא תקללני” “Rav Yehudah SAID TO HIM, ‘CHANGE THE WORDING.’ Redirect your words toward others. Say ‘He shall strike *him*,’ and likewise ‘He shall strike *them*.’” Here, too, Rav Yehudah instructs Rav Kahana to deliberately say something other than what he would like to say.

In short, Rashi views the phenomenon expressed by the term *תיקון סופרים* and that expressed by the term *כינה הכתוב* as being one and the same. The literal meanings of the terms, however, sound contradictory. *תיקון סופרים* sounds like the scribes are doing the correcting, while *כינה הכתוב* sounds like the verse is doing the euphemizing. Because of arguments they find convincing that indicate that Rashi intends *תיקון סופרים*

to be taken literally, Prof. Maori and apparently Prof. Shapiro prefer to have Rashi using **כינה הכתוב** flexibly. On the other hand, (a) because I do not find those arguments convincing, (b) because of Rashi’s definitions of the word **כינוי** in *Iyov* 32:21, *Megillah* 25a, and *Sanhedrin* 56a, and (c) because of the precedents found in the Rashba and Tosafos Rid, I take Rashi’s use of **כינה הכתוב** in its strict sense, and view his use of **תיקון סופרים** as being flexible.

I thank Prof. Shapiro for his valuable and incisive comments, and for bringing the discussion to a greater level of depth and clarity. ❧