ing to which several versions lack the word "said" after Rava's name); Nedarim 19b, 47a; Baba Batra 173a (see the discussion of Pesaḥim 25b–26a, above. The alternate version on Baba Batra 173a lacks the word "said" after Abaye's name); Makkot 12a (Friedmann, *Tractat Makkoth*, p. 31, n. 19). Rava responds to statements by Abaye in many other contexts (see, for example, n. 33, above), but the role of later editors in formulating Rava's statements makes it impossible to pinpoint the exact number. On several occasions, for example, the anonymous editors added a clause to Rava's statement informing us why he rejected Abaye's view and followed with an alternative.

Other than cases in which Abaye and Rava definitely speak in one another's presence, Abaye betrays awareness of the views of Rava only in: Shabbat 123a; Eruvin 15a; Pesaḥim 12b; Gittin 61a–b; Baba Meẓia 109a; Bekhorot 4a; and possibly Shabbat 66a (see the discussion of Pesaḥim 25b–26a, above. See also *DS* ב, on Shabbat 66a, according to which several versions lack the word "said" after Abaye's name); Moed Katan 13a (Halivni, *Mekorot u-Mesorot:* Yoma-Hagiga, p. 542, n. 3); and Ḥullin 125b (see the discussion of Pesaḥim 25b–26a, above). On Ḥullin 133a, Abaye comments on a statement apparently made first by Rava. See, however, *DS* ו, and Michael Higger, *Oẓar ha-Baraitot* (New York: Dvei Rabbanan, 1948), vol. 10, p. 115, according to which Rava is quoting a *baraita*. Similarly, on Ḥullin 50a–b, there is no need to assume that Abaye's source for the opinion of Rav Nahman is Rava, who quoted it previously. Abaye could easily have independent knowledge of Rav Nahman's view.*

(*) Shortly after the final proofs of this article arrived, I discovered that Jacob Isaac Lichtenfeld, *Sefer Mavo Hadash laTalmud* (New York, 1958), pp. 231-278, believed that Abaye and Rava had virtually no contact with one another. His treatment of the subject is illuminating, though uncritical.

Rashi's Commentary on Genesis 1–6 in the Context of Judeo-Christian Controversy

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The exegesis of Scripture in the Middle Ages is not purely an expression of intellectual activity for itself, but essentially a taking of position in regard to the social and religious problems of the time. The evolution of a *peshat* movement among Jewish scholars in the twelfth century (the "School of Rashi") is essentially the reaction of the Jews to the Renaissance of this century and to the resurgence of religious controversy between Christians and Jews.

The present article develops this thesis and intends to show that Rashi's commentary on Genesis 1–6 contains obvious signs of polemics with Christians: 1. The commentary on Genesis 1:1 is the response of Rashi to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders. 2. The explanation of Rashi to the verse "and the *ruaḥ* of God moved upon the face of the waters" is intended to counter the identification of this *ruaḥ* with the Christian Holy Spirit. 3. Rashi's commentary on the story of Adam's sin rejects the Christian dogma of Original Sin and the prefigurative approach about many details of the story. 4. In his commentary to the creation story, Rashi intends to reject philosophical and theological approaches. 5. Rashi develops a strict angelology for reasons equally didactic and polemical. 6. Rashi's commentary to the creation of Adam is obviously polemical.

Let us try to reconstruct the Bible curriculum of the institution in which Rashi studied as a child.[1] As a child, he studied Biblical vocabulary in Hebrew together with a vernacular (Old French) translation. The most common textbooks were the local glossaries, of which late copies are still available in manuscript form, two having been published in scholarly editions.[2] Later on, Rashi would study *midrashim* (Jewish hom-

(1) The Jewish sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries give very little information about Jewish education in Western Christendom at that time. Our attempts at reconstruction are mainly based on hints and asides in the contemporary literature; see my article "Rashbam's Exegetical Method in the Light of the Contemporary Historical Situation," *Studies in Rabbinical Literature, Bible and Jewish History: Dedicated to Professor E.Z. Melamed* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1982), pp. 48–74 [Hebrew]. Cf. also in N. Morris, *A History of Jewish Education*, Book 2, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 245–272.

(2) Cf. L. Lambert et L. Brandin, *Glossaire hébreu-français du 13ème siècle* (Paris, 1905) and also M. Banitt, *Le Glossaire de Bâle* (Jerusalem, 1972), Vol. 1, Introduction, Vol. 2, Texte.

iletical commentaries) on the Pentateuch. These would include Bereshit Rabba and other midrashim.[3]

As Rashi matured and began to teach, the curriculum changed. The Pentateuch was taught not only through *midrashim* but also together with Rashi's own commentary. It is self-evident that a curriculum reflects a society's needs and aspirations. Thus, a change in the curriculum implies a change in needs and aspirations. We must attempt to answer the key question: What happened at the end of the 11th century which stimulated the change in the educational curriculum of Franco-German Jewry? What were the new needs that were not satisfied by the existing curriculum? This question leads to another: What is the nature and basic approach of Rashi's commentary, and how does it meet its society's new needs? Our third question is: Why did Rashi give his commentary the form which it bears?

Our methodological assumption is that medieval Biblical exegesis is not a purely cultural phenomenon completely detached from its historical environment. We submit that Biblical exegesis was greatly influenced by the changes in the society that produced it.[4] The commentary is affected by the demands of reality, yet it also attempts to shape reality. The more we know about the historical background to the formation of the commentary, the better we can understand it.

Let us now turn to our three questions. The first and third questions will be answered briefly. The second question, which deals with the different types of commentary and Rashi's methodology, will be answered in detail. This will be done through an examination of several of Rashi's explanations to the early part of Genesis.

The last decades of the eleventh century and the whole of the twelfth century witnessed a Renaissance in Christian Western Europe.[5] New schools frequently opened as annexes of cathedrals and monasteries, and the number of students increased dramatically. As political boundaries were both uncertain and flexible, students were able to move freely from school to school. Since Latin was common to all students of Western Europe, knowledge circulated freely. This Renaissance had, of

(3) Cf. Rashi's commentary on Genesis 3:8.

(4) Cf. J.F. Baer, "The Historical Background of the 'Raya Mehemna'," *Zion* 5 (1940) 2.

(5) The pioneer studies of C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (15th printing, Cleveland, 1970), and of G. Paré, A. Brunet and P. Tremblay, *La renaissance du 12ème siècle — les écoles et l'enseignement* (Paris-Ottawa 1933), are still regarded as required reading for understanding the changes in the intellectual life of the twelfth century. Many works have since been written on this same subject. They will be quoted where they are relevant to this work.

course, a religious tone, but demands for a rationalist approach to the Articles of Faith, to Bible commentary and to scientific observation made themselves felt. A new type of intellectual made his appearance. He was characterized by extreme confidence in the ability of man's mind to know and to understand everything.[6] How could this confidence be reconciled with obedience to traditional values? Bernard of Chartres propounded his solution in the form of a parable. Truly, he explained, our forefathers were giants and we are dwarfs in comparison to them; however, since we are sitting on the shoulders of giants, we can see further.[7]

The intellectual energy of the Christians was accompanied by religious vitality, primarily expressed through the Crusades. The religious revival left its impression in many spheres and influenced every class in society. Many commentaries on the Bible and works on theological subjects were written, many ecclesiastical buildings were constructed, popular religious customs such as pilgrimages to places which were considered holy were extended. The masses played an active part in every cultural event promoted by the clergy.[8] Of particular interest is the flowering of the religious play, which represented Biblical stories and incidents from the lives of the Church Fathers. The plays were written in French and were an important means of popular education.[9] Preaches preached in the vernacular at every opportunity and used their sermons to impart the principles of the Christian faith in a popular manner to their listeners.[10]

It was only natural that the Christian sages would discuss subjects on which they took issue with the Jews and that literature was designed to satisfy internal and external needs simultaneously: it both strengthened the faith of the student clergy and prepared them for debating with Jews if necessary.[11] Indeed, the character of religious polemic in this rich and tumultuous age changed significantly.[12]

(6) For further information about intellectuals in the Middle Ages, see L. le Goff, *Les intellectuels au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1957). The Jewish equivalent is apparently "the enlightened person," addressed by R. Yosef Kara and Rashbam in their commentaries. See my article, *supra*, n. 1, p. 66, n. 122.

(7) Cf. R.K. Merton, *On the Shoulders of Giants* (New York, 1965); E. Jeaunau, "Nains et géants," *Entretiens sur la Renaissance du 12ème siècle* (Paris, 1968), pp. 21–38.

(8) Cf. R. and C. Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1984), pp. 14–30.

(9) Cf. R. Pernoud, *Lumière du moyen-âge* (Paris, 1981), p. 131 and *passim*.

(10) For the use of French to propagate the principles of the Christian faith see below.

(11) Cf. B. Smalley, "Ralph of Flaix on Leviticus," *R.T.A.M.* 35 (1968) 52–53 and n. 92.

(12) Cf. A. Funkenstein, "Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic

What was the situation in the Jewish community at that time? Intensive Torah study was common in Jewish communities prior to this period, but there is no doubt that the Renaissance was felt at all levels of Jewish society. Jews and Christians were neighbors, spoke the same language, traded with each other, and exchanged visits on weekdays and probably even on festivals.[13] I assume that in addition to the business and social ties between Jews and Christians, cultural links also existed ('culture' in the Middle Ages meant 'religion' and 'sacred books'), and that these links were far more extensive than is generally believed or reflected in the rare contemporary evidence.

As a result of these social and intellectual connections, or perhaps of the *Zeitgeist*, there are significant parallels in Jewish and Christian approaches to Biblical exegesis, education, and teaching. It is worthy of note that literal Bible commentary flourished in both Christian and Jewish circles at the same time. It is also noteworthy that the influence of the incipient rationalist approach to Bible commentary on both Christians and Jews was most evident in the last thirty years of the eleventh century. This form of commentary reaches its peak in the twelfth century, declining towards the end of that century in both Christian and Jewish circles. We find Jewish parallels to *lectio divina, questio, disputatio,* and *collatio.* The Jewish *ḳara* is apparently the Christian *lector.* The search for undistorted Biblical texts and the great interest displayed by scholars in the grammar of the sacred tongue in that particular period were common to both religions.[14]

Although we do not encounter Bernard of Chartres' parable about dwarfs on giants' shoulders in the writings of the French rabbis,[15] we do find many expressions of intellectual self-confidence. Rashbam, for instance, claims that: "Whoever wants to understand the real meaning of these verses will be enlightened by my commentary; my predecessors did not understand them at all."[16]

The Jews were threatened in their religious faith. We find moving

in the Twelfth Century," *Zion*, new ser. 33 (1968) 125–144.

(13) Cf. L. Rabinowitz, *The Social Life of the Jews of Northern France in the XII–XIV Centuries* (London, 1938), pp. 130–134; J.F. Baer, "Rashi and the Historical Background of his time," *Tarbiz* 20 (1940) 320–332; B. Blumenkranz, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde occidental* (Paris, 1960), pp. 54–58.

(14) See my article, *supra*, n. 1, pp. 60–62.

(15) The same metaphor will be mentioned a few generations later in a responsum of R. Isaiah of Trani (d. about 1250). On the Jewish use of this metaphor see I. Ta-Shma, "'Hilkhata Kebatrai' — Historical Aspects of a Legal Rule", *Shenaton Hamishpaṭ Ha-ivri*, Annual of the Institute of Research in Jewish Law, 6–7 (1979–1980) 418–419.

(16) See his commentary on Exodus 3:11.

corroboration in an anonymous commentary to one of the *piyyuṭim* 'liturgical poetry'.[17] E. Urbach's opinion that the commentator is R. Yosef Kara, a younger contemporary of Rashi, seems tenable. The commentator says, "Although my mind absorbs their words and my heart is aflame to err after them, even so Your closeness is my good."[18] The mind is convinced by the words of the Christian neighbors who strongly tempt him to "err" and follow their ways. Only that special feeling of closeness, which is the God-given privilege of the Chosen People, keeps the Jews Jewish. The danger of Christian influence on the Jews was, therefore, very real. In this context, Rashi's appeal to Israel's best minds to enlist in the fight against external temptation is very understandable. Rashi writes on the Song of Songs, 7:8–10:

> *And let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine* — confirm my words, and do not be tempted by the non-Jews. Let the best minds and wisest men amongst you stand up for their faith and answer the tempters, so that the younger generation may learn. *And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine* — make sure that your answers be like the best wine. *That glideth down smoothly for my beloved* — I am careful to answer them in order to remain steadfast.... *I make you swear* — The Jewish entity speaks up against the nations, however much I complain and lament, my lover (God) holds my hand and sustains me in exile, therefore I make you swear, ... though it will not help you.

From the end of the 11th century, the leaders of the Jewish community were confronted by two important challenges: to meet the challenge of the Renaissance spirit and to create a defense against the threat of growing Christian vitality. However, it does seem that the French rabbis took the spiritual-religious contest with the Christians very seriously — and it was a contest and not just polemics. Christian scholars quote Jewish commentaries in their works without, unfortunately, explaining how they reached these sources.[19] The Jews make very few references to these encounters.[20]

(17) Cf. *Arugat Habośem*, ed. E.E. Urbach (Jerusalem, 1947), Vol. 2, p. 220.

(18) On R. Yosef Kara and his involvement in the Jewish-Christian polemic, see A. Grossman, "The Jewish-Christian Polemic and Jewish Biblical Exegesis in Twelfth Century France (on the Attitude of R. Josef Kara to the Polemic)," *Zion* 51 (1986) 29–60 .

(19) B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Indiana, 1970), has become a classic. See especially chapters III–IV which deal with the exegesis of the school of S. Victor.

(20) A possible reference is related in Rashi's commentary on Ezechiel, Cf. *Rashi's Commentary on Ezechiel 40–48*, ed. A.J. Levy (Philadelphia, 1931), p. 7. On Rashbam's encoun-

Rashi not only issues his clarion call: he also provides the answer. His commentary to the Pentateuch was a contribution to his people at a time of transition. Rashi understood that studying the Pentateuch in the traditional manner no longer satisfied the intellectual curiosity of his generation. He therefore undertook a new commentary to the Pentateuch. This was a very complex task. No Franco-German Jew had preceded Rashi in this matter. Among the Christians, the situation was different. Christian scholars of the generations before Rashi had prepared selections from the commentaries of the Church Fathers for their students' use — selections, not collections.[21] The external presentation, including continuity, non-citation of sources, and the reworking of the language of patristic sources, resemble Rashi's commentary. Was Rashi familiar with these works, or had he perhaps heard of them as a possible model for a Jewish commentary to the Pentateuch? I do not know, but the hypothesis certainly merits our attention.

Rashi explained the principles of his commentary in a comment to Genesis 3:8:

> There are many homiletical explanations which our Rabbis have arranged in *Bereshit Rabba* and other midrashic collections. I came only to present *peshuṭo shel miḳra* and to bring only those *aggadot* which resolve the words of the verse and its *shmu'o*[22] as a word fitly spoken.

This is a famous statement which has recently been analysed thoroughly by Sarah Kamin.[23] Scholars have paid particular attention to the second part of the statement, "I came only ...," which describes Rashi's approach, but the first part of the statement should not be neglected. The rabbis *arranged* the midrashic explanations; i.e., the *aggadot* were arranged by subject following the order of the Pentateuch. The collections remain the classic textbooks and Rashi refers his reader to them, "if you are interested in more detail and greater depth, you may refer to these collections." "I," continues Rashi in the same statement, "have only come to present ...". *Peshuṭo shel miḳra* is the immediate literal meaning of the verse, its primary aspect,[24] whereas for the clarification of the ideology, beliefs, and opinions which are to be found in the Torah, Rashi relies on a selection of the sages' *midrashim*. Rashi did not attempt to produce an independent literal commentary to the Pentateuch, but his avowed intention is to cite a selection of *midrashim* which explain the verses according to the *peshaṭ*. The commentary would be traditional: Rashi did not undertake to invent any new explanations, yet he successfully satisfied the demands of the new intellectuals, who were interested in a literal commentary. Thus, Rashi's commentary is neither "a compromise between literal commentary and *derash*" as Lipschuetz claims, nor is it "a confusion of the two" as Poznanski claims; but it is, rather, an avowed homiletical commentary as Abraham Halevi Bakrat concludes in his *Sefer Zikkaron*.[25] This was Rashi's aim. Different scholars, who claim that he failed, are mistaken.[26]

Rashi found himself at a turning point betweeen the past and the future, between tradition and reason (*auctoritas* and *ratio* of the Latin authors). In the context of the history of French Bible commentary, one can say that Rashi's approach legitimized literal commentary without affecting the importance of *derash*. Among Rashi's pupils, some, such as R. Yosef Kara and Rashbam, would devote themselves to literal exegesis, whereas others would continue to turn to *derash*. The latter remained anonymous, and their commentaries may be found either as interpolations in Rashi's commentary itself[27] or as separate appendices to Rashi's commentary.[28]

ters with Christian scholars, see my article "The Method of Rashbam in his Commentary on the Halakhic Part of the Pentateuch," *Millet* 2 (Tel-Aviv, 1984) 275–288.

(21) Cf. G. Dahan, "L'exégèse de l'histoire de Cain et Abel du XIIème au XIVème siècle en Occident," *R.T.A.M.* 49 (1982) n. 7.

(22) Our version differs slightly from that of Berliner in his second edition of Rashi's commentary to the Pentateuch (1905). In his first edition (Berlin, 1867) Berliner mentions another version, which he decided not to reproduce. Our version is based on several manuscripts and early printed editions. The key word is *u-shmu'o* 'literally'. One can understand the importance of this word through a comparison with a commentary to another verse: "*For a bribe blinds the eyes of wise men* (Deuteronomy 16:20) — in Pentateuchal law. You say in Pentateuchal law, but perhaps only the eyes of wise men *ki-shmu'o*? [literally]. We learn ..." (*Mekhilta of R. Yishmael, Mishpaṭim*, 82, Horowitz-Rabin edition, p. 328) See also E.Z. Melamed, *Bible Commentators*, Vol. I (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 370. Rashi uses that same term in his comment on Genesis 33:20.

(23) See S. Kamin, *Rashi — The Literal Meaning and the Homiletical Meaning of the Bible* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 62–76 [Hebrew]. Kamin makes use of the Berliner version (without using the word *u-shmuo*), although she is aware of the existence of another version (p. 63, n. 23).

(24) We follow Kamin's opinion. See Kamin, *op. cit.*, p. 134; also reproduced in other parts of her book with slight changes.

(25) Cf. *Sefer Zikkaron*, ed. M. Phillip (Petah Tikva, 1980), p. 53.

(26) These definitions of Lipschutz and Poznanski's opinions and the conclusion that Rashi "missed the mark" are taken from Moshe Greenberg's article "The Relationship Between the Commentaries of Rashi and Rashbam to the Pentateuch," *Sefer Seligman*, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 559–567 [Hebrew].

(27) We are referring to the many additions which can be found in the various manuscripts of Rashi's commentary to the Pentateuch. For an attempt to collect and document these additions, cf. *Tosafot ha-Shalem*, ed. Y. Geless (Jerusalem, 1982); see also my article, "On the Changes in Rashi's Commentary to the Pentateuch," *Tarbiz*, 56 (1987) 211–242.

(28) For example, *Minḥat Yehuda* by R. Yehuda ben Eliezer (who lived in France in

We have endeavored to explain the development of Rashi's commentary in the context of the beginning of the Renaissance. What remains is to consider how he presented his commentaries which served as a response to the *minim*, i.e. the Christians.[29]

In order to answer the Christians, one must be acquainted with the principles of their faith. Did Rashi have access to the religious literature of his Christian neighbors? Scholars have linked this question to another: Did Rashi know Latin? — since medieval Christian literature was written in Latin. Very few scholars have felt that they can answer this question with a definite affirmative. Isaac Baer found in Rashi terms which had been borrowed from Latin legal literature.[30] Another scholar, Arieh Grabois, claimed: "Rashi attested that he studied Christian Biblical exegesis."[31] However Yehuda Rosenthal demonstrated that the term which served as the basis for Baer's thesis occurs in rabbinic literature and that Rashi derived it from there and not from Latin sources.[32] Grabois' claim is rightly dismissed by David Berger, who states that it rests on hasty conclusions.[33] At this stage it is preferable to admit that we are unable to answer this question with an unqualified affirmative.[34]

Rashi, indeed, observes in different places in his commentary on the Bible that the specific observation was intended as a response to Christians. From where did he derive his knowledge of Christianity? Rosenthal rightly observes that Rashi had two major sources of information: rabbinic literature and discussions with his Christian neighbors. Rosenthal also demonstrates that Rashi was familiar with various details of Christian ritual.[35] It is likely that Christian neighbors used to visit

the first half of the fourteenth century) and other essays. For works about the *Tosafot*, cf. S.A. Poznanski, "An Introduction about French Rabbis Who Explained the Bible," which is an introduction to his edition of *A Commentary on Ezechiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets* by R. Eliezer of Beaugency (Warsaw, 1923), pp. 92–114 [Hebrew].

(29) For the meaning of the term *minim* in Rashi's writings, see below n. 44.

(30) Cf. Baer, *supra*, n. 13, pp. 326–328.

(31) Cf. A. Grabois, "The Hebraica Veritas and Jewish Christian Intellectual Relations in the 12th Century," *Speculum* 50 (1975) 632.

(32) Cf. Y. Rosenthal, "Anti-Christian Polemics in the Biblical Commentaries of Rashi," *Studies and Texts in Jewish History, Literature and Religion* (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 104, n. 21.

(33) Cf. D. Berger, "Mission to the Jews and Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Polemical Literature of the High Middle Ages," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986) 589–590, n. 68.

(34) For a summary of the current situation in research, see S. Kamin, "Rashi's Commentary on the Song of Songs and Jewish-Christian Polemic," *Shnaton — an Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* (Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, 1983–4), p. 246, n. 121.

(35) Cf. Y. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 104–105.

Rashi's home,[36] and it is possible that he became acquainted with liturgy, such as that dealing with Enoch's resurrection, through these neighborly visits. Christian iconography, "the most powerful auxiliary of thought"[37] was there for all to see, including Jewish passersby. Was Rashi aware of it? He does not say so, perhaps because of "an old rule of discretion observed by most Jewish writers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance."[38]

It seems to us that we should add a third source of information which other scholars have overlooked. In addition to Christian literature written in Latin, France witnessed the development of a literature written in the vernacular.[39] It was mostly made up of translations from the Latin but, as time passed, original essays were written. Daniel Poirion, a specialist in medieval French literature, regards translations from the Latin as a dominant feature of the period.[40] Through translation, French-speakers were able to read books in different disciplines. The books were mostly on religious subjects. The Bible was translated in its entirety, or almost in its entirety, into French. We have excellent French translations of the Book of Psalms. The translations were made, however, at the beginning of the 12th century, toward the end of Rashi's life, or even after his death. Poirion's statement, nevertheless, seems reasonable: "Une histoire de la lecture médiévale, fondée sur la date des manuscrits, s'éloignerait beaucoup d'une histoire de la création littéraire."[41]

Among the books which were written at that time we will refer to the *Elucidarium* as an example.[42] The book was written as a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil. The pupil's questions are concerned with Christian religious topics, such as the creation, angelology, original sin, the Antichrist, etc. The book was written to train student priests and to help them as priests in their work with their parishioners. Scholars describe the work to Honorius Augustodunensis, who lived in the late 11th to mid-12th century. He was a pupil of Anselm of Canterbury.

(36) Cf. *Responsa of Rashi*, ed. I. Elfenbein (New York, 1943), Responsum no. 114, p. 142. See also *supra*, n. 20.

(37) Cf. E. Male, *L'art religieux du 12ème siècle en France* (Paris, 1924), p. III.

(38) Cf. A. Neher, *Jewish Thought and the Scientific Revolution of the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1986), p. 208.

(39) See the survey work of Paul Zumthor, *Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale* (Paris, 1954).

(40) Cf. Daniel Poirion, *Précis de littérature française du moyen âge* (PUF Paris, 1983), p. 24.

(41) Cf. D. Poirion, *op. cit.* p. 13.

(42) Cf. Yves Lefèvre, *L'Elucidarium et les Lucidaires.* Contribution, par l'étude d'un texte, à l'histoire des croyances religieuses en France au moyen-âge (Paris, 1954).

Anselm's writings had such a strong influence on the work that some of the copyists even ascribed it to him. The book was very popular and was translated and edited many times. We may assume that this book, or works with similar content and approaches, may have been acquired by French Jewish scholars in the vernacular version. There is no reason to talk about a language barrier: French Jews knew French. David Berger contends that:

> When Jewish works, for example, refute Christological interpretations that are found only in Christian commentaries and not in polemics, we have reason to suspect that the Jewish authors got the information from a literary source.[43]

His assumptions seem reasonable but it should be pointed out that the source could have been available either in Latin or in French. In short, we may conclude that Rashi certainly had access to contemporary Christian literature.

Did Rashi take advantage of the opportunity to read Christian writings? If so, did he find it necessary to refer to them in his commentaries? Rashi's writings do not give an unambiguous answer to this question. One should, however, pay special attention to those places where Rashi refers to the *minim*. Rosenthal rightly assumes that for Rashi, the term *minim* means the Christians of his time.[44] These references are few and far betweeen and do not provide a sufficient basis for the assumption that there is an anti-Christian tone to Rashi's commentary. Several scholars have pointed out that Rashi warned against conducting disputations with the Christians.[45] Shereshevski refers to the apostate Herman of Cologne in this context. Herman claims that Christological commentaries to certain part of the Bible persuaded him to convert.[46] A real danger presented itself and Rashi preferred that disputations between Jews and Christians not take place. Senior ecclesiastics also expressed their opposition to disputations with the Jews on more than one occasion.[47] Disputations, however, did take place. Contrary to popular belief, the initiators of the disputations were not always Christian. On more than one occasion it was a Jew who challenged his neighbor to a disputation.[48]

(43) Cf. D. Berger, *op. cit.* n. 68.

(44) Among the proofs adduced by Rosenthal, two are worthy of particular interest: "*Minim* are the pupils of Jesus of Nazareth who denied the words of the living God" (*Rosh Hashana*, 17b) and in Tractate *Soṭa*, 49b: "... those who are seduced by the error of Jesus and his pupils, are called *minim*." These quotations do not appear in standard editions of the text because of censorship.

(45) Cf. E. Shereshevsky, "Rashi's and Christian interpretations," *JQR* 61 (1970—71) 76; Y. Rosenthal, *op. cit.* p. 106.

(46) Cf. also D. Berger, *op. cit.* pp. 586–587.

(47) Cf. C. Spicq: "Pourquoi le moyen-âge n'a-t-il pas davantage pratiqué l'exégèse littérale?" *Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 1 (1941) 176. Spicq assumes that the demands of the senior members of the Church were voiced more and more strongly, and were responsible for the decrease in literal Bible commentary among Christians at the end of the 12th century.

Rashi's comments to the Mishnah of Rabbi Elazar (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 38b) reveal a practical knowledge of the art of disputation. R. Elazar teaches, "make an effort to learn how to answer an heretic".[49] Rashi explains that "one must know how to answer a heretic who bases his apostasy on the Torah." The Talmud continues and distinguishes between a non-Jewish heretic and a Jewish heretic. The latter is worse, since, according to Rashi, "he knew the Jewish religion and rejected it, he will be very much more meticulous and it will be very much harder to convince him." He also comments, "*the heretics are corrupt* — and they justify their corrupt faith from the Torah." The heretics, i.e. the Christians, justify their religion through Jewish sources. The Jew must learn Torah for polemic purposes.

Rashi, thus, approaches disputation from two directions: the need to try to avoid being involved in a disputation, but at the same time, the necessity of preparing oneself well for that eventuality. His commentary to the Bible illustrates his position well. It pays very little attention to Christian claims. He apparently ignores them completely. On the other hand, his comments include a Jewish response to many Christian beliefs.

A survey of recent research on Rashi's commentary with reference to the Judeo-Christian controversy seems to reinforce our viewpoint. Rosenthal found that several comments by Rashi to the Book of Proverbs were clearly of a polemic nature, although Rashi did not say so openly.[50] Shereshevsky points to a large number of references in Rashi's commentary to Psalms which answer Christian claims either overtly or covertly.[51] Although Rashi does not admit it openly, Sarah Kamin has demonstrated that his commentary to the Song of Songs includes "parallels and contradictions ... to the Christian exegesis of the Song of

(48) We assume that the meaning of the term *teshuvat ha-minim* is not only 'an answer to the heretics', but also 'a question to the heretics'. See my "The Meaning of '*teshuvat ha-minim*' in the Writings of Our French Masters," *Sinai* 98 (1986) 144–148.

(49) The version in printed texts is הוי שקוד ללמוד תורה ודע מה שתשיב לאפיקורס It is evident that Rashi's text did not include the word ודע On the changes of the version of this *mishna*, see the article of Dov Rapel: "*heve shakud lilmod ... ma she-tashiv la-epikoros*," *Teḥumin* 3 (1982) 478, n. 2.

(50) Cf. Y. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*

(51) Cf. E. Shereshevsky, *op. cit.*

Songs both from the point of view of content and of methodology."[52] Other Bible commentators of the French school followed Rashi's example. Abraham Grossman believes that "R. Yosef Kara's commentary to the Bible attacks Christological commentaries more openly than those of Rashi and Rashbam ... (but) R. Yosef Kara concealed his polemic objectives and motives and it is not always easy to reveal them."[53] We have also found that in many of Rashbam's comments to the Torah and in his methodology, his reaction to the Jewish-Christian controversy is very apparent.[54] It seems to me that Rashi's commentary on the Creation shows a similar approach: there are very few direct or open references to the Christians, yet he offers comments which are potentially useful for anti-Christian polemic.

In his treatment of the first six chapters of Genesis, Rashi refers to the opinions of Gentile commentators five times, three times openly, and twice through hints. The open references are in his comment to Genesis 1:1, "If the Gentiles will say to the Jews ..." and Genesis 1:26, "There is room for *minim* to overrule ... and the answer to the *minim* is written in the continuation." and in Genesis 6:6, "And this is my answer to the *minim*". A concealed reference is to be found in Rashi's explanation of the nature of Adam's sin. We will treat the subject in more detail. Furthermore, in five separate places in his commentary on the creation, Rashi makes clear his opinion regarding the time of creation (1:1, 6, 14, 24 and 2:4). It seems that Rashi's emphasis implies that the commentary was written in response to the different opinions which Christians expressed about the creation. Spicq, a specialist on medieval Christian Biblical exegesis, discovered that Genesis, together with Psalms and the Song of Songs, were the books most commented on prior to the eleventh century. "The book of Genesis satisfies all curiosity about the sources of the world and Man ... for the bible [wrote Scotus Erigena] knows everything and tells everything."[55] The awakened awareness of nature and its laws, which was one of the features of the 12th-century Renaissance, stimulated interest in Genesis. Spicq continues in a footnote: "The 12th century established the Book of Genesis as the required text for the theology of the cosmos ... in view of the Hexaemerons which were written at this time."[56] In the story of the Creation in Genesis, Christians find confirmation of the ideas of Plato's *Timaeus* together with hints about basic Christian dogmas, such as the Trinity, Original Sin, the Fall of the Angels, etc. At that time many works were written on these subjects, including scholarly works and popular works, such as the works of Honorius Augustodunensis.

(52) Cf. S. Kamin, *supra*, n. 34.
(53) Cf. A. Grossman, *supra*, n. 18.
(54) Cf. my article, *supra*, n. 1.
(55) Cf. C. Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1944), p. 58.
(56) Cf. C. Spicq, *op. cit.*, n. 5.

Let us now examine six subjects from Rashi's commentary to the beginning of Genesis:

1. Rashi opens his commentary to the Pentateuch with Rabbi Yitzḥak's question: "He should have started the Pentateuch with 'This month shall be unto you the first of months' (Exodus 12:2), which is the first commandment Israel received, and why did he start with 'In the beginning'?" The mysterious Ambrosiaster asked a similar question in the fourth century: "Quare legem non in primordio dedit?"[57] and it was repeatedly asked by different Christian commentators of the Middle Ages. Rashi's answer is that the Torah wished to emphasize that the Jewish people's right to the Land of Israel is derived from the will of the Creator. D. Louys recently suggested that this comment was written as a reaction to the First Crusade.[58] This Crusade aimed to liberate the Holy Sepulchre from the heretics, and its success presented Judaism with a serious theological challenge: The conquest of the Land of Israel by the Christians was interpreted as additional proof that God had repudiated the election of Israel, and as additional confirmation of the validity of God's new covenant with the Christians, the real Israel, the spiritual Israel. Rashi's answer was intended to emphasize that Israel's right to the Land remained unaffected by fleeting historical events, since this right was based on God's will.

2. When was the world created? The story of the Creation in the first two chapters of Genesis presents difficult linguistic and theological problems for the commentator. What is the syntax of the phrase 'In the beginning ...?' The content of the first verse contradicts the description of the creation of the heavens on the second day and of the earth on the third day. There is no reference to the creation of darkness, of the waters, the wind, the angels, etc. Yet all the above appear in the Torah. Jewish scholars discussed all these problems and offered many different solutions. Rashi offers a novel solution: "The Bible did not intend to show the order of creation. All the forces of nature were created on the first day and activated at their destined time." Rashi starts

(57) Cf. G. Bardy, "La littérature patristique des *questiones* et *responsiones* sur l'Ecriture Sainte", *Revue Biblique* 41 (1932) 343. On Ambrosiaster, cf. A. Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiater* (Texts and Studies VII, b; Cambridge, 1905).
(58) Cf. D. Louys, "En lisant Rashi," *Vav — Revue du Dialogue* (Paris, 1969).

with a negation, "The Bible did not intend . . .," followed by the positive statement, "all the forces of nature, etc." One can only deduce from the literal sense of the verses at what stage each part of the creation was set in its place, and no more. Rashi refused to offer Biblical legitimization for any speculations about the cosmogony, neither those of the Jewish *midrash* nor those of the Christian scholars. Whoever wishes to explore the mystical aspects of the creation refer to *Sefer Yeẓira* and the other *midrashim*, but will find no answer in the Biblical verses themselves. The literal interpretation of the story of Creation is in accordance with the Jewish law expounded in the Mishnah tractate *Ḥagiga* (1:1): "Two people should not study the mystical aspects of the story of creation together." Rashi used very few *midrashim* in his commentary to the story of Creation, many fewer than was his custom in his commentary to the rest of the Pentateuch. Those comments that are preceded by the words, "as our Rabbis explained," or "as explained in *Bereshit Rabba*," etc., are not regarded by Rashi as *midrashim* which resolve difficulties nor did he see them as straightforward explanations.

One may summarize the point and conclude that Rashi's intention was to remove the literal form of the story of Creation from the bounds of the various schools of mysticism. The verse in Ecclesiastes 7:23, "I said, I will get wisdom but it was far from me," is explained by Rashi:

> *I said, I will get wisdom* — to know wisdom, what it is. *Far* — the far things which were at the time of creation. *It is very deep — and who can find it?* I am not allowed to meditate about what is above and what is below, what is before and what is behind.

This approach was later to be developed by Rashbam, but Rashbam's justification of the avoidance of mysticism which appears in his commentary to Ecclesiastes is somewhat different.[59]

3. *"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."* (Gen. 1:2) Both early and later commentators were puzzled by this verse. What is the meaning of the word *ruaḥ* (it can mean both 'spirit' and 'wind') when it is associated with God? And what is the meaning of "moving upon the face of the waters"? Our sages explained the verse in two different ways. In *Ḥagiga* 12a, Rabbi Yehuda is quoted as saying in Rav's name that the winds were one of the ten things that were created on the first day; although from the context it is not clear if Rav was re-

(59) According to Rashbam, there are two types of wisdom, "regular wisdom, without depth, which the world needs . . . and the remaining deep wisdom, that men do not need and do not generally study, the wisdom which I cannot understand and explore — for example, the *merkava* (the Divine Chariot) and the *sefer yeẓira* (the Book of Creation)."

ferring to the 'wind' that we are discussing. In *Bereshit Rabba* 2:4, we find a saying of Rabbi Ḥaggai in the name of Rabbi Pedat (which is connected with the different *midrashim*) which refer to our verse. The term obviously refers to the natural force, the wind. There are also other *midrashim* which regard 'the Spirit of God' as a spiritual phenomenon. In *Bereshit Rabba* 8:1, Resh Laḳish explains the verse in Psalm 139:5:

> *"Forwards and backwards You formed me"* — backwards to the last day and forwards to the first day, for Resh Laḳish said: the Spirit of God which was moving was the soul of Adam, for it is said "and the spirit of God rested upon him" (Isa. 11:2).

In another *midrash*, also in *Bereshit Rabba* 2:4, Resh Laḳish explains the verse in an eschatological manner:

> Resh Laḳish explained the verse (Gen. 1:2) by kingdoms: 'and the arth was waste' — that is Babylon . . . 'and emptiness' — the Medes . . . 'and darkness' — the Greeks . . . 'on the face of the waters' — this current evil empire. 'The spirit of God moving' is the spirit of the Messiah according to the verse (Isa. 11:2). 'And the spirit of God rested upon him', how is it that we deserve this coming upon the water? Through repentance, which is compared to water, 'pour out your heart like water' (Lam. 2:19).

In the next *midrash*, we find the mystical story of Ben-Zoma, who said:

> I looked at the act of creation and the distance between the upper waters and the lower waters is no more than two or three fingerbreadths and the verse does not say that the spirit of God "blew", but that it "hovered", like a bird flying and flapping with its wings, his wings touch and do not touch.

Rashi uses neither the first explanation, that *ruaḥ* means 'wind', nor the *midrashim* of Resh Laḳish. His explanation is that: *"The spirit of God moves* — the royal throne stands in the air and is moved over the face of the waters by God's breath and His word, like a dove hovering over his nest." Rashi's early researchers found it difficult to identify his source; even Berliner's suggestion is farfetched. Rabbi Kasher's solution in his *Torah Shlema* seems more feasible. He ascribes it to *Midrash Shoḥer Ṭov* (Psalms 93:3):

> *The floods have lifted up, O Lord* — Rabbi Berachiah said in the name of Ben Azai (Ben Zoma): The waters were rising up and reaching God's Throne as it is written, "The Spirit of God is moving upon

the face of the waters" and he also says: "as an eagle appears over his nest and hovers over his nestling." (Deut. 32:11)[60]

There is a feeling of mythology in this *midrash*. The next *midrash* quoted in *Shoḥer Ṭov* tells how the waters in their arrogance tried to wash away the whole word but were defeated by God's rebuke. Why did Rashi choose such a little-known source? This *midrash* does not give a more satisfactory explanation that the other *midrashim*; it dies, however, have one advantage — it ensures that the Spirit of God cannot be identified with Christianity's Holy Spirit.

4. Angels play an important role in the world of monotheistic belief: they are, so to speak, God's representatives on earth. The frequent appearance of angels in the bible indicates that within the Biblical worldview the existence of angels is beyond doubt and, thus, for medieval theologians, beyond controversy. The debate concerns the nature of angels, their identity, their functions, their date of creation. While primitive Christianity was much concerned with this subject, it soon became relatively peripheral. In the second half of the 11th century, however, angels again became the focus of discussion. Many Christian theologians, for some generations after, devoted space to an exposition of their angelologies.[61] Angels played an important role in the Jewish world as well.[62] Rigorous Jewish monotheism, however, faced a sharp theological problem: cannot these heavenly beings be understood to be partners of God in the creation of the world and its governance?

Rashi was an exegete, not a theologian. Hence, a systematic angelology was not required of him. Nonetheless, his commentary to Biblical texts in which angels are mentioned is worthy of special attention. To the chief question 'When were the angels created?', there is no information explicitly given in the Bible; yet Rashi, commenting on Gen. 1:5, found it necessary to express his view. Rabbinic tradition provided four options:[63] 1) Angels pre-exist the creation of the world. 2) They were created on the first day. 3) They were created on the second day. 4) They were created on the fifth day. The proponents of these views

(60) Rashi may have used a *midrash* which is unknown to us. However, the identification of the Spirit of God "moving upon the waters" with the Throne of Glory is to be found in the Koran (Sura 11, verse 9), which also makes use of Jewish *midrashim*.

(61) Cf. the entry 'Angélologie' in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Vol. 1, p. 1222 and *passim*.

(62) Cf. E.E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem, 1975), Chapter 8.

(63) Cf. E.E. Urbach, *ibid.*, pp. 203–205.

(except for the first) adduce support from the Biblical text, but not from the verse addressed by Rashi. Rashi writes:

> *One day* (Gen. 1:5) — according to the language of this section it should have been written "the first day", the other days are qualified second, third, fourth, etc. Why does it say "one"? Because God was one (i.e. alone) in His world, for the angels were not created until the second day. So it is explained in *Bereshit Rabba*.

The comment invites careful scrutiny. The creation narrative in the first two chapters says nothing of angels: why does Rashi introduce them here? To be sure, Rashi's question (why the cardinal number?) is legitimate at the level of *peshaṭ* as well. It is doubtful, though, whether his answer is *peshaṭ*.

The closing reference to *Bereshit Rabba* also merits our attention. The citation lays bare Rashi's tendency, insofar as the text presents a dispute rather than a uniform position. R. Yoḥanan, basing himself on Ps. 104:3–4, states that the angels were created on the second day, R. Ḥanina holds they were created on the fifth day, utilizing Gen. 1:20 combined with Isa. 6:2. But the principal point of the *midrash* is the conclusion of R. Yitzḥak, the disciple of R. Yoḥanan:

> Both according to R. Ḥanina and according to R. Yoḥanan it is agreed that none (of the angels or active beings) was created on the first day, that you should not say Michael was pulling in the south and Gabriel in the north and the Holy One, blessed be He, was stretching in the middle etc.

Not only did the angels not assist with the creation; they did not even exist at that time. It was this last inference that Rashi wished to bring home to his audience.

Rashi's tendency becomes clearer in his commentary to the visit of the 'men' to Abraham (Gen. 18–19) and to the story of Jacob's struggle with the adversary (Gen. 32:30). Rashi consistently seeks to deny the angels' autonomy or independent identity. The angel promises Abraham a son at the same time next year when he states "I will return unto you ..." Rashi notes with precision:

> The angel did not promise him that he would return; it was but the mission of God that he was fulfilling, as it says: "And the angel of God told her: I will multiply thy seed ... (Gen. 16:10)" He has no power to cause increase, but in the mission of God he told him this.

We have no midrashic source for this comment; it originates with Rashi who wished to stress the absolute dependence of the angels on God. Even their choice of language is determined by Him. When the angels display a slightly independent streak, telling Lot "we will destroy this place" (Gen. 19:13), they are compelled, as punishment, to concede "I cannot do a thing" (19:22). As Rashi explains: "This is the punishment of the angels because they said 'we will destroy', making it depend on them, therefore, they did not move from there until they were compelled to admit that it was not in their power." A reading of the Biblical text shows that Rashi, in a sense, twisted the angels' words, since 'we destroy' is followed by "*God had sent us* to destroy it." Nor does Rashi's comment to v. 22 appear to be *peshaṭ*, for the statement "I cannot do a thing" manifests not the angels' dependence, but rather his consideration for Lot. In any event, it was more important for Rashi to further his idea than to adhere precisely to *peshaṭ*. Another sign of Rashi's method here is that this comment (the punishment of the angels) originates with Rashi, and was not derived from the sources (*Bereshit Rabba* 58:9 and 68:12) whence he drew the notion of the angel's arrogance.

An angel has but a single mission; that missing being fulfilled, he withdraws (Gen. 19:1). Moreover, the insubstantiality of the angels is so complete that they lack even a persisting name. Jacob wants to learn the name of the 'man' with whom he wrestled, only to be asked: "Why do you ask for my name?" (Gen. 32:29), meaning, according to Rashi: "We have no persisting name, our names change according to the mission on which we are sent."[64]

It appears to me that Rashi developed this strict angelology for reasons equally didactic and polemical. He wished to demonstrate to his enlightenment-hungry contemporaries that there was no place for all those angelological beliefs which arose from peripheral Jewish *midrashim* and from those popular Christian works which had begun to circulate at that time both in Latin and in Old French. We know, for example, that Honorius Augustodunensis, in his *Lucidarium*, deals with the topic of angelology.[65] He stated that the angels were created on the first day, have free choice, have persisting names, and are ranked hierarchically.

(64) Later scholars — perhaps Rashi's pupils — very correctly explain the intention of Rashi's commentary אין לך בידיעת שמי כל תועלת כי אין הכוח, והיכולת בלתי לה' לבדו, אם תקראני בשביל שלא יאמרו העולם פלוני המלאך לא אענך ומצרתך לא אצילך עשה זה, והוא אינו אלא שליח. (*Ḥize Menashe* [London, 1908] *Sefer Tosafot ha-Shalem* [Jerusalem, 1984], quoted from the Sasoon 1006 Manuscript).

(65) Cf. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, CLXXII, col 1119.

These views and their like certainly reached the ears of the Jews, and it was in opposition to them that Rashi wrote his commentaries.

Rashi's angelology can be further explored through his commentaries to Gen. 5:24 (the disappearance of Enoch) and the story about 'the sons of God'[66] (Gen. 6:1ff.). Rashi states unambiguously that Enoch was a human being, righteous to be sure, but flesh-and-blood rather than angelic. His 'taking' by God is interpreted by Rashi in precise detail so as to eliminate any misunderstanding. The text is somewhat mysterious: "And Enoch walked with God and *was no longer* for God had taken him." Rashi explains, alluding to Ezek. 24:27, that 'taking' is synonymous with death, with the addes signification of premature death. If so, "God had taken him" means "removed him and caused his death prematurely." "Was no longer" along these lines also means: "is no longer in the world to fill out his year." The only element that is absent from the verse, and which Rashi supplies to make his interpretation plausible and complete, is the reason for the 'taking'. "He was righteous but prone to turn to evil, therefore He was quick etc." With this approach Rashi rejects all *midrashim* which attribute to Enoch a quasi-angelic nature and to his 'taking' a trans-human translation. It appears to me that he is also rejecting Christian interpretations and particularly that which sees the disappearance of Enoch as a 'foreshadowing' of the Resurrection dogma.[67]

The story of the "sons of God (*elohim*)" who take the daughters of men as wives is, of course, one of the primary sources for belief in "fallen angels" which occupies a central position in official Christian angelology.[68] Rashi stresses: "*Sons of elohim* — sons of ministers and judges" (Gen. 6:1), i.e., human beings, not angels. Rashi goes on to demonstrate that the Hebrew word *elohim* contains the fundamental meaning of dominance, citing as proof Ex. 4:16 and 7:1 where human beings are called *elohim* relative to other people — Moses vis-à-vis Aaron, and Moses vis-à-vis Pharaoh, respectively. The sons of *elohim* in our story are later called *nefilim* and 'men of renown'. Rashi takes care to interpret *nefilim*

(66) On the Jewish legends about these stories, cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1913), Vol. I, pp. 124–127, 130–140, and cf. notes 58–60 for the Christian interpretations, Vol. IV (Philadelphia, 1925). Cf. also, for Christian views of Enoch's translation, M. Alexandre, *Le commencement du livre Genèse I–V, La version grècque de la Septante et sa réception* (Paris, 1988), pp. 390–392.

(67) Cf. M. Alexandre, *ibid.*, p. 391.

(68) The 1215 Lateran Council stated the official position of the Church on angelology. Cf. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, op. cit.*, M. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

as giants; 'men of renown' as Erad, Methuchael, and Meḥuyael.[69]

5. It is unnecessary to emphasize the centrality of Adam and Eve's sin in Christian dogma. This narrative is the major source for the dogma of Original Sin. Jesus is the 'new Adam' who atones for and liberates mankind from the old Adam's sin. Furthermore, Christians saw in the details of the story a foreshadowing of that which Christ himself was to undergo: Adam sins on Friday afternoon — Jesus is crucified on Friday afternoon. Adam is cursed with thorns and thistles — Jesus purifies the thorns which became his crown.[70]

Rashi does not declare any polemical intent here. His commentary to the narrative appears only to address problems of structure and language, as is appropriate to a *peshaṭ* exegesis. The resolution of these problems, to be sure, is derived from rabbinic *midrash*, but it is after all Rashi's proclaimed approach to cite *midrashim* that resolve the Biblical text. Thus, one can understand Rashi's commentary to Adam's sin without referring to the non-Jewish background, and this is the way it is generally understood. At one point only, it seems to me, Rashi's selection of a *midrash* appears arbitrary, and this arbitrariness lays bare the commentator's tendency. However, once that tendency is discovered it sheds light on other detailed features of the commentary to the chapter.

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the wind of the day" (Gen. 3:8). We have already quoted Rashi's comment. Rashi had valid reasons for attaching his comment to this verse. The verse is rich in meaning and offered Rashi the opportunity of using his two kinds of commentary. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden" is interpreted literally: "They heard the voice of the Holy One for the Holy One was walking in the garden." This explanation is anthropomorphic, but Rashi was convinced that this was the literal meaning of the verse. Several generations later, the scribes and printers were bothered by the anthropomorphism and 'improved' the text; but the many extant manuscrits leave no doubt as to the original version. For the phrase "in the wind (Hebrew: *ruaḥ*) of the day", Rashi reproduces an *aggada* which 'settles' the *midrashim* passage in a fitting manner: "*Le-ruaḥ ha-yom* — in that direction to which the sun travels, which is the west, for towards evening the sun is in the west and they committed the sin in the tenth hour." Rashi's explanation is a combination of a *midrash* from the tractate Sanhedrin 38b, together with a midrash from *Bereshit Rabba*. We find two opinions in *Bereshit Rabba*. The first is that quoted by Rashi. The second is that the verse refers to an easterly wind which blows in the morning. It would be difficult to determine which of the two explanations is preferable. Rashi used the first of the two *midrashim* in order to emphasize that Adam and Eve sinned at the tenth (of the twelve) daylight hour. This emphasis was necessary both for polemic and exegetical reasons. Original Sin is a basic Christian dogma. Anselm of Canterbury devoted one of the major chapters in his theological work to this dogma. Honorius, his pupil, presented it in a popular manner. Let us compare Honorius' explanation of the story of Adam in paradise to that in *Sanhedrin* which Rashi utilised.

(69) Printed texts of Rashi, including Berliner's, and many MSS contain an additional comment: "Another approach: sons of *elohim* are the ministers (*śarim*) who fulfill God's mission; they too mingled with them." Berliner already noted that several MSS have *shedim* 'demons' instead of *śarim*, also, the Leiden MS does not document this comment at all. We may add that neither does Oxford Heb. MS 2440. Munich Heb. MS 5 contains it at the end of the entire verse, i.e. as an appendix. All of this indicates (in the light of my analysis in *Tarbiz* 56, *supra* n. 27) that it is not by Rashi. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the angelological interpretation of the word *nefilim* here andin Numbers 13:33 is missing from several MSS.

(70) For the Christian sources of the details of this story, cf. M. Alexandre, *op. cit.*; for the idea Adam/New Adam, p. 324; for the Friday afternoon, p. 43 and p. 306; for the purification of the thorns, p. 321.

Sanhedrin

R. Yoḥanan bar Ḥanina said: the day was twelve hours long. In the first hour his dust was collected, in the second the body was formed, in the third the limbs were stretched out, in the fourth the soul was inserted into the body, in the fifth hour he stood upon his feet, in the sixth he gave names, in the seventh he was united with Eve, in the eighth two went up on the bed and four descended, in the ninth they were commanded not to eat from the tree, in the tenth they sinned, in the eleventh they were judged, in the twelfth he was expelled.

Lucidarium

The student: How long were they in the garden of Eden? The teacher: Seven hours. Student: why no longer? Teacher: Because the woman betrayed them shortly after she was formed. In the third hour after his creation, Adam gave names to the beast, in the fifth hour the newly-formed woman sunk her teeth into the forbidden fruit and offered it to her husband and he ate it out of love for his wife, resulting in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden by God at the end of the eighth hour.

Thus, according to the *midrash*, Adam remained in the Garden twelve hours, whereas the Christian version reckons eight hours. The difference of four hours expresses the radical difference between the two theological outlooks. The Jewish view is that Adam had intercourse with

his wife Eve, and that she conceived and gave birth before the sin. There is no connection between the sin and the birth. What is more, Adam and Eve's children, who were born before the sin, are not 'stained' by their parent's action and do not need atonement. Many Christian theologians claimed, however, that "sexual intercourse and original sin are identical." Anselm himself maintained that, "wherever there is a natural birth, there is a transfer of the original sin"[71] and only he who was born from an unnatural birth is capable of atoning for those who are stained by Adam and Eve's sin. Rashi did not need to read Anselm's work to be acquainted with this basic Christian belief; he knew it through his Christian neighbors or through some popular French book, and he used this *midrash* to show that there is no Biblical evidence for this belief.

Rashi will reinforce his view in his commentary to Gen. 4:1 and 5:1. In his comentary to 4:1, Rashi attacks the famous Christian phrase "in paradiso virginitas, extra nuptiae," writing:

> *And the man knew* — already before the events related above, before he sinned and was driven out of the Garden of Eden. So also the conception and birth. Had it been written וידע אדם it would imply that after he was driven out the children were born to him.

Rashi found in the Biblical sentence והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו a *textual* proof for his commentary. We would normally expect to find וידע אדם את חוה אשתו, i.e., a grammatical form which expresses the succession of actions in story, and what we discover instead is והאדם ידע, a pluperfect use, which emphasizes that Adam *had* known his wife *before* the previous episode, before the sin and the driving out from Eden.[72] In his commentary to Gen. 5:1, Rashi stresses once more: "*In the day that God created* — this states that on the day when he was created he begot progeny."

Let us now turn to other aspects of the story. Rashi develops the idea that the story of Adam's sin is not an independent literary unit but an episode introduced parenthetically into the story about the naming of names:

> *And the serpent was more subtle* (3:1) — What connection is there between the following narrative and the statement just made? The latter (chapter) should have been followed by "and He made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them" (3:21), but

(71) Cf. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Vol. 12 (Paris, 1933), p. 438.

(72) Rashbam implicitly used the same rule to explain that Esau received an amount of money as his birthright, not a pottage of lentils. This explanation would be used by Jews against the Christian argument for the dishonesty of Jacob. Cf. *Sefer Yosef Ha-mekane*, ed. Y. Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1970), para. 16, pp. 40–41.

> Scripture informs you with what plan the serpent assailed them: he saw them naked and he coveted her.

This idea is important enough for Rashi to warrant repetition at the end of the narrative:

> *And the man called* (3:20) — Scripture now reverts to its previous topic "and the man gaves names." It broke off only to teach you that through the giving of names Eve became his mate ... but because Scripture writes "and they were both naked" it therefore follows on with the passage dealing with the serpent, to inform you that because he saw her nakedness and that they displayed no feeling of shame in their actions etc. ...

In other words, the story of Adam's sin is subordinate to that of naming. It was introduced here to 'teach' proper behavior. Its purport is didactic rather than theological. It warns us against lack of shame in our private lives. It shows us the danger of adding to God's commandment ("*do not touch it* — by adding to the command she detracted from it."). It teaches that God conducts Himself according to the principle of 'measure for measure': "*Shrewder than all the animals* — according to his shrewdness and greatness was his dawnfall; shrewder than all, cursed of all." It is also possible to find in Rashi a clear tendency to relax the stringency of Adam's punishment. The 'thorns and thistles' which the earth will grow (v. 18) are "artichokes and cardoon which are fit for food after preparation," and even this curse is abrogated after ten generations, with the advent of Noah (Rashi to 5:29, s.v. *ze yenaḥamenu*). Adam's sin therefore left no imprint on his descendants. So too the day of the sin — Friday — does not commemorate in any way the episode of the serpent. To be sure, it is distinguished by the Biblical text as 'the sixth day' (i.e., with the definite article, as opposed to the other days of creation). But this distinction is one of honor: it alludes, according to Rashi, to the sixth day of Sivan, the day upon which the people of Israel, in accepting the Torah, will justify the existence of the world.

6. It is hardly necessary to mention the fundamental theological dispute between Jews and Christians regarding the interpretation of the phrase "let *us* make man" (Gen. 1:26). It reverberates through the Talmud and Midrash and the early Church Fathers. Here Rashi explicitly deals with the Christians. He cites *Bereshit Rabba* and a comparison between his language and that of the Midrash is instructive.

Ber. Rab. 8:8

R. Samuel ben Naḥman in the name of R. Jonathan: When Moses was writing out the Torah, he wrote up the work of each day. When he came to the verse "and the God said, 'Let us make man . . .' He said: 'Lord of the age, in saying this you give an opening to *minim*.' He said to him, 'Write it anyhow, and if someone wants to err, let him err.' The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Moses, as to this man whom I am going to create, will I not bring forth both great and unimportant descendants from him? It is so that if a great man has to get permission from a lesser person and says 'Why in the world should I have to get permission from an unimportant person?' people will say to him 'Learn a lesson from your creator, who created the creatures of the upper world and the creatures of the lower world, but when he came to create man, went and took counsel with the ministering angels'."

Rashi

Let us make man — although they did not assist Him in forming him (the man) and although this may give the *minim* an occasion to overrule, yet the verse does not refrain from teaching proper conduct and the virtue of humbleness, namely, that the greater should consult and take permission from the smaller; for had it been written "I shall make man," we could not, then, have learned that He spoke to His judicial council but to Himself. And as a refutation of the *minim* it is written immediately after this verse "And God created the man" and it is not written "and *they* created."

Rashi sharply abridged the *midrash*, thus outlining even more clearly his own exegetical elaborations and additions. The *midrash* takes it for granted that the creation of man is exclusively the act of God. Rashi stresses: "They did not assist Him in the creation." The moderate phrase "You give an opening to *minim*" becomes in Rashi's hands: "this may give the *minim* an occasion to overrule." This is definitely belligerent language. The verb *lirdot* appears in the very same Biblical text: "rule over (*redu*) the fish of the sea, etc.", where Rashi explains: "This word has the sense of overruling and the sense of descent. If he merited, he overrules (*radah*); if he did not merit, he descends lower (*yarod*) and is dominated by the beast." It is difficult not to regard Rashi's phrasing as an expression of the existential seriousness he attributed to religious debate, in which the winner rules it over the loser. Again, the *midrash* concludes in a general way "learn from your Creator", while Rashi specifies "to teach proper conduct and the virtue of humility." Rashi deviates from his custom and justifies his view by explaining why the verse could have said "I will create" without causing misunderstanding. The last sentence in Rashi completes the *midrash* by adding a sentence drawn from another source.

In addition to the interpretation of the verse in itself, Rashi is also setting down a principle: the purpose of the Torah is to educate us to virtue. The verse we are discussing represents an extreme case, for here the Torah seeks to achieve its didactic aims at the risk of opening the door to corrupt theological views. Nonetheless, character formation takes precedence over world-view. If we reread Rashi's commentary to the story of the creation, we will indeed recognize that this is the primary purpose of the Torah in this section. It does not say "and it was good at the end of the second day" to teach us that "an unfinished action is not in its fullness and goodness."[73] Rashi carefully compares command and execution with respect to the creation of the trees and grasses (vv. 11–12) to teach the value of precise obedience to God's instructions. The creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars is an object lesson in humility (16, s.v. *ha-meorot ha-gedolim)* and forbearance (s.v. *ve-et ha-kokhavim*).

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There are many facets to Rashi's achievement and to his personality. This study intends to reveal a neglected one: Rashi's responsiveness to the needs of his generation who stood perplexed before the spiritual awakening that begun to affect Western Europe, and which historians have come to call 'the twelfth-century Renaissance'. On the recondite subjects with which Genesis begins, Rashi proposed a commentary based on *peshaṭ* and a scrupulous selection from Rabbinic *midrash*. In the course of this oeuvre he presented a Jewish position in the Jewish-Christian debate. Many relatively controversial topics are discussed in the commentary, though not all those raised by the Christian theologians. For Rashi is, in the final analysis, an exegete rather than a systematic theologian: he does not address a subject unless the Biblical text invites his comment. Moreover, Rashi maintained that the Torah's principal aim is not to present a theology but to educate man to the acquisition and exercise of virtue.

(73) Jerome found here, among other things, an allusion to the negative nature of the number 'two': "The number two is no good because it divides the unity and prefigures the covenant of marriage." Cf. Jerome, Ep. 49, 19 = Adv. Jov. I, 6, quoted by M. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 113.