

HA'AZINU Q&A

01

TWENTY QUESTIONS · EVERY ANSWER FROM RASHI

Q1 Moshe calls the heavens and the earth to listen at the very start of the parsha. Why these two witnesses?

Moshe said: tomorrow I will die. If Yisrael later deny accepting the bris, heaven and earth will always remain to refute them — witnesses that never pass away.

Rashi 32:1, האזינו השמים

Q2 Moshe compares his teaching to rain. What is he telling us about the Torah?

Just as rain gives life to the world, so the Torah he gave Am Yisrael gives life to the world.

Rashi 32:2, יערף כמטר לקחי

Q3 Moshe says he will proclaim Hashem's Name and tells the people "havu godel" — ascribe greatness. What practice do Chazal derive from here?

This is the source for answering "Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L'olam Vaed" after a bracha in the Beis Hamikdash.

Rashi 32:3, כי שם ה' אקרא

Q4 Hashem is called "HaTzur," and the pasuk immediately says "tamim pa'alo." What is the point?

Even though Hashem is strong, when He punishes, He does not act with a flood of anger but exactly by judgment — because His deeds are perfect.

Rashi 32:4, הצור תמים פעלו

Q5 The blemish is called "His children's," not Hashem's own. What is the point?

The harm done was the children's own blemish, not any flaw in Hashem — the destruction is theirs, not His.

Rashi 32:5, שחת לו וגו' בני מומם

Q6 Hashem is called "avicha konecha," your Father who 'acquired' you. What three meanings sit in that word?

The One who acquired you; the One who nested you, like a nest tucked in the rocks, in a strong land; and the One who set you right through every kind of correction.

Rashi 32:6, הלא הוא אביר קנך

Q7 We are told to ask "your father" and "your elders" about the days of old. Who are they?

"Your father" means the neviim, called fathers (Elisha called Eliyahu "avi avi"); "your elders" means the chachamim.

Rashi 32:7, שאל אביר; זקניך

Q8 Why did Hashem divide the nations of the world into seventy?

For the number of Bnei Yisrael destined to descend from Shem, and for the seventy souls of Yaakov's family who went down to Mitzrayim, Hashem set the nations' borders — seventy languages.

Rashi 32:8, למספר בני ישראל

Q9 Yaakov is called "chevel nachalaso," the rope of Hashem's inheritance. Why a rope?

Yaakov carried a threefold merit — his own, his father's, and his grandfather's — like a rope twisted from three cords.

Rashi 32:9, יעקב חבל נחלתו

Q10 Hashem "found" Bnei Yisrael in a desert land. What is being praised?

He found them faithful to Him in the wilderness — they accepted His Torah, His Kingship, and His yoke there, which Yishmael and Eisav had refused to do.

Rashi 32:10, ימצאו בארץ מדבר

Q11 Hashem's care is compared to an eagle carrying its young. Why an eagle?

An eagle fears only an arrow, so it carries its young on its wings rather than in its feet — “better the arrow pierce me than my young.”

Rashi 32:11, יפרש כנפיו יקחהו

Q12 Rashi tells of “honey from a rock” in a place called Sichni. What happened there?

A father sent his son for pressed figs from a barrel; the son found honey overflowing its rim. “Reach deep inside,” said the father, “and you’ll find the figs” — Eretz Yisrael’s fruit was that plentiful.

Rashi 32:13, וינקחו דבש מסלע

Q13 “Cream of cattle” and “fat of lambs” are said to describe two different eras. Which ones?

The cattle and fine flour describe the days of Shlomo HaMelech; the fat lambs and flowing wine describe the days of the Aseres HaShevatim.

Rashi 32:14

Q14 Rashi explains “kasisa” with a physical picture. What does it mean?

Like a person who is fat on the inside, causing folds of fat to show on the outside as well.

Rashi 32:15, כשית

Q15 The people “forgot the Rock who bore them.” What is the word “teshi” hinting at?

Chazal read it as related to “matish,” to weaken: when Hashem wants to do them good, they provoke Him and, as it were, weaken His hand.

Rashi 32:18, צור ילדך תשי

Q16 Hashem calls the people “a generation of change,” dor tahpuchos. What does that mean?

They take Hashem’s good will toward them and flip it into anger — the very thing meant for their good gets turned around by their own deeds.

Rashi 32:20, דור תהפכת המה

Q17 How is “for their rock is not like our Rock” explained?

Even the enemy should have seen that their own gods accomplished nothing against Hashem — it was Hashem alone Who handed Yisrael over.

Rashi 32:31, כי לא כצורנו צורם

Q18 “Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay,” says Hashem. When exactly does this happen?

“At the time their foot slips” — when the merit of Yisrael’s own forefathers, which they have been relying on, finally runs out.

Rashi 32:35, לעת תמוט רגלם

Q19 “I put to death and I bring life,” declares the pasuk. What do the doubled words “Ani Ani Hu” show?

“It is I” who brings a person down, and “I am the One” who lifts a person back up — the very same Hashem controls both.

Rashi 32:39, אני אני הוא

Q20 Hashem sends Moshe up Har Nevo to die at the end of the parsha. Why let him look at the land at all?

“I know it is dear to you,” Hashem tells him, “so I say to you: go up and see it” — a final kindness, even though he could not enter.

Rashi 32:52, ושמה לא תבוא