



Kedoshim

Likkutei Sichos Vol 27, Kedoshim 1

With Rabbi Shalom M. Paltiel

Leviticus 19:14: Do not curse a deaf person. Do not place an obstacle before a blind person. Fear your God.

Rashi:

Do not curse a deaf person.

From here I know only a deaf person. From where do I know to include any person in this prohibition?
From the verse: “nor may you curse...of your people.”

Do not place an obstacle before a blind person.

i.e., before one who is “blind” in a particular situation: do not give advice which isn’t to benefit him. Do not say, “Sell your field and buy yourself a donkey” and you manipulate him and buy it from him.

Fear your God.

Since people cannot know whether his intention was good or bad, and he may excuse himself by saying, “I intended it for the good” – it says here: “fear your God,” who knows your thoughts. Similarly, regarding any act that is solely known to him, it also says: “fear your God.”

Do not place an obstacle before a blind person.

i.e., before one who is “blind” in a particular situation: do not give advice which isn’t to benefit him. Do not say, “Sell your field and buy yourself a donkey” and you manipulate him and buy it from him.

Questions on Rashi:

1

Why not interpret the verse plainly?

2

And if not, why give an example from speech rather than action? (e.g. Don't give a Nazarite a cup of wine)



Mizrachi's explanation:

Mirroring beginning of verse: “Do not curse a deaf person” which Rashi explains isn’t literal; similarly here, “a blind person” isn’t literal.



Rebbe’s objection:

“Deaf person” includes literal meaning, only not exclusively. Here Rashi excludes literal meaning?!

Plus, answer doesn’t address question 2.





Gur Aryeh's explanation:

Rashi deduces from end of verse that we're not discussing a literal obstacle: "Fear your God" – an act known solely to him and God.



Rebbe's objection:

- Case when no one else sees
- Rashi would have included end of verse in same entry (as elsewhere)
- At a minimum he would have added: "etc." (as elsewhere)



Korban Ahrons's explanation:

Rashi derives it from
choice of words: “Do not
GIVE an obstacle”, rather
than **PLACE**;
Applies well to giving
advice.



Rebbe's objection:

Give is commonly used
regarding a place (not just a
person).

Some examples:

- (Exodus 25:16) Give the Tablets into the Ark.
- (Exodus 25:30) Give the showbread onto the Table.
- (Exodus 29:12) Give blood of Sacrifice on corners of Alter.

Additional questions on Rashi:

Do not say: “Sell your field and buy yourself a donkey” and you manipulate him and buy it from him.

Compare to Midrash (Rashi’s source):

- Don’t propose to Cohen woman unfit to marry a Cohen
- Don’t suggest he leave early when gangsters will hurt him
- Don’t suggest he leave at noon when the sun will harm him
- Don’t tell him “sell your field...”

3

Why is **any** example needed?

4

Why choose Midrash’s **last** example?

5

Why the ending: “and you manipulate him and buy it from him.”

Possible solution to 5: Text had indicated donkey may be better purchase than field.
But: clearly field is often better purchase.
Plus: If so, how is this advice an “obstacle”?



Rebbe's Explanation:

When Torah repeats instruction in different words, Rashi endeavors to derive additional law:

Some examples:

- “Honor your father and mother” vs. “Fear your mother and father”
- “Honor my Sabbath” vs. “Guard my Sabbath”
- “Don’t cook a kid in his mother’s milk” repeated 3x
- Prohibition of murder repeated numerous times in different words



What's bothering Rashi:

(Exodus 21:33-34) Prohibition against open pit in public place

- Includes all physical and spiritual damage
- What new law is our verse teaching?
- This answers all 5 questions!

Indicative in further precision in Rashi:

Fear your God.

Rashi: Since people cannot know whether his intention was good or bad, and he may excuse himself by saying, “I intended it for the good” – it says here: “fear your God,” who knows your thoughts.

Midrash (Rashi's source): “You might say “I'm giving him good advice” since the matter is hidden from other people.”