

Rashi #1: Biblical Text: Lv19-02b Speak to the entire congregation of the Jewish people and say to them: Be holy because I am holy, I am God your Lord.

Rashi Text: Be holy: Be separated from sexuality and sin. For wherever you find [mentioned in the biblical text] a fence on *sexuality* you will also find [mentioned] *holiness*.

Examples [From Rashi]: (i & iii) [Speaking about the priests] a) They will be holy to their God; they will not desecrate the name of their God, for they offer the roasts of God, the meals of their Lord, and they will be *holy*. b) They may not marry a *prostitute*, nor a woman defiled from the priesthood; they may not marry a divorcee, for they are *holy* to their God. c) And you shall treat them with *holiness* since they offer the meals of God; they are holy to you; I am God who makes you holy.

Examples [From Rashi]: (ii) [Speaking about the high priest] a) And he [the high priest], should marry a woman in her virginity. b) He should not marry these: a widow, a divorcee, a woman unfit for priesthood, and a *prostitute*, c) but he should marry a wife who is a native virgin. d) He should not make unfit his children in their nation, for I am God who make him *holy*.

As the examples show, wherever abstention from *sex* is mentioned (clauses i)b) and ii)b), holiness (clauses ii)d) and ic) are also mentioned, thus textually proving Rashi's point.

Rashiyomi: I) Nachmanides gives his famous comment here that the commandment to be holy prohibits a person from becoming a *gluten with permissible biblical actions*. It incorrectly appears that a) Nachmanides disagrees with Rashi and that b) Nachmanides gave a philosophical commentary while Rashi confined himself to text.

This is ridiculous. Nachmanides himself, several dozen times in his commentary, affectionately refers to Rashi as *our master*. Nachmanides was not disagreeing with Rashi but clarifying Rashi! Rashi was as much a philosopher as Nachmanides. The difference between them is their educational approach. Nachmanides taught by abstraction and theory while Rashi followed the constructivist educational approach of guided discovery, presenting examples and letting the reader infer conclusions. Both approaches are equally valid. In fact, the famous Briggs-Meyer personality test recognizes the *abstraction-first-examples-second* as well as the *examples-first-abstraction-second* personalities. They are both equally valid. We will show that Nachmanides was clarifying, not disagreeing, with Rashi in a moment. First however, let us look at Rashi's sources.

II) Rashi derives his comments from Leviticus Rabbah a Midrashic compilation. Interestingly, the Leviticus Rabbah does bring the examples in Lv21 cited above. But the Midrash *also* brings the juxtaposition of Lv18 (the incest prohibitions) and Lv19-02 be holy. Why did Rashi omit this second citation?

Because, like Nachmanides, Rashi also wanted to emphasize that holiness is not exclusively abstention but a simultaneity of abstention *and* proper indulgence, restrained enjoyment. That is why he selected the second set of verses for examples. See for yourself! Clause ii)c) mentions that the high priest is not just an abstainer from prostitutes but a proper indulger in virgins; clause i)c) mentions that the ordinary priests don't just abstain, but they participate in God's meals, in his roasts.

So, both Rashi and Nachmanides agree, and agree completely, that holiness is not abstention but a simultaneity of (proper) indulgence and abstention, an avoidance of glutenism but a pursuit of appropriate pleasure. What then is the difference between Rashi and Nachmanides? Nachmanides taught by abstract concepts; contrastively Rashi taught by picturesque example. He brought the verse *marry a virgin not a widow* which carries more punch than abstraction to illustrate proper pursuit of pleasure.