

ParShaT *HaaZiNu*- One Pager Series

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[Background: We present a controversy between Rashi and Ibn Ezra in this week's parshah. This controversy reflects the *peshat-derash* controversy that raged in the middle ages. I will defend Rashi over Ibn Ezra. Your job is to guess my defenses; of course, if you still want to defend the Ibn Ezra you may do so.]

Rashi #1,2 Biblical Text: Dt32-07

Remember the history of the world

Understand the years of each generation

Ask your father(1) and he will tell you
--- Your elders(2) and they will say to you

Rashi: (1) *your father* refers to the prophets; cf. 2Ki02-12 Elishah referring to Elijah as “My Father My father, the chariot of Israel”

(2) *Your elders* refers to the sages.

Ibn Ezra: *The two phrases your father(1) your elders(2) is just repetition This is the way of poetry*

Summary: Rashi sees significance in the different terms, *father, elder* while Ibn Ezra considers them poetics without special significance. Who is right?

Questions to defend Rashi:

- (1)** Can you further defend Rashi. Abstractly how does Rashi see *father, elders*. *Father* to Rashi means _____; *elders* to Rashi means _____
- (2)** Besides the difference in *father-elder* how else does the text indicate that this is not just poetics
- (3)** Kugel taught us that parallel phrases, two similar almost identical phrases ((A) ask your father and he will tell you; (B) your elders and they will say to you) should be interpreted with climax as A, moreover B. This would support Rashi. Can you interpret the verse this way, A, moreover B
- (4) Advanced:** Can you give a comparable statement using American culture where it would be obvious that Rashi is right (the two terms have different meanings) and Ibn Ezra is wrong.

Answers: (1) *Father* refers to anyone who takes care of you; a *father, teacher, prophet*. *Elder* refers to communal leaders such as the Rabbis (Sages) or members of the Sanhedrin (parliament)

(2) Use of singular plural; *ask your father and he will tell you; your elders and they will say to you*

(3) (A) If you need to know something ask the person who takes care of you, your father figure; MOREOVER, (B) you can even ask your communal leaders as they will spend time teaching you.

(4) Ask your personal teacher in school and he will tell you; (moreover) ask your senators at town-hall meetings and they will say to you.