



The Community

Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

The "Goes on Goichen" Creature

In order to understand this *Sicha* ("Talk") of the Rebbe, we will first list a few of Rashi comments. Our Torah-portion speaks of the laws of which species are kosher and which are not. When it lists the "creeping creatures" that are forbidden to eat, the verse (Leviticus 11:42) states, "Any that goes on gochoin, and any that walks on four to any that has many legs, among all creeping creatures that creep on the ground, you shall not eat, for they are an abomination." Here are Rashi's comments on the verse:

"Any that go on gochoin"

-Rashi: "'Go on gochoin': This is the serpent, and the expression goichen denotes 'bending down,' (so that the phrase means:) that which walks bent down and then falls upon its belly."

"Any that go': to include earthworms and what resembles those that resemble them."

"And any that walks on four"

-Rashi: "This is the scorpion."

"Any': to include the beetle, called *escarbot* in French, and what resembles those that resemble them."

"To any that has many legs"

-Rashi: "'Has many legs': This is the centipede, a creature with legs from its head to its tail, on either side, called *centipede* [in French]."

Questions on Rashi:

(i) The only "creeping thing," the Torah calls, "goes on gochoin," is the serpent, in Genesis (3:14), "Upon your gochen you shall go." However, why does Rashi then continue with, "And the expression goichen denotes 'bending down,' (so that the phrase means:) that which walks bent down and then falls upon its belly," when Rashi saw no need to explain the word *goichen* the first time it is used in Genesis, --where Rashi just explains the serpents punishment, "It had legs, but they were cut off"?

Note: Concerning Rashi's not explaining the word in Genesis, we could say:

(a) In a previous verse (-2:13), on the words, "And the name of the second river is Gichon," Rashi explains, "'Gichon': [It is named thus because] it flowed and roared, and its roaring was very great, like (-Exod. 21: 28), 'If an [ox] gore (*yigach*), for it gores and goes along and roars.'" Hence, so too, with the serpent, "Upon your gochen you shall go," speaks of the serpent slithering upon the ground, and (-Ibn Ezra, *ibid* 3:14), "(*Gichon* is so called) because of the air that rushes forth from it ("flowed and roared")." Hence, Rashi feels no need to explain it again in the next chapter in Genesis.

(b) The *Translator* (Oruch, Page 388; quoting from *Yonothon ben Uziel* and *Onkeles*) translate the word *Gichon* to mean *Stomach* (or as the Ibn Ezra says *Chest*), and being that this is the simple meaning of this Hebrew word, Rashi sees no need to define it here in Genesis.

However, the question then begs to be asked, why does Rashi here, in Leviticus, change the meaning he is using for *Goichen* in Genesis, from *Roar*, *Stomach* or *Chest* to *Bending Down*!?

(ib) Why does Rashi define the word "Any (that go)," which is a biblical term that comes to, "add on to include," two things: (1) *earthworms* (2) *and what resembles those that resemble them*?

(ic) Why does Rashi not follow the Talmud's version (-Chulin 67b) of this teaching, "'Any' to include the earthworm and similar to an earthworm," which only, "adds on," one thing, the *earthworms* types.

(id) Why does Rashi include in the heading of the comment, "(Any) that go," when it is only the word "Any" that is source of, "add on"? --Especially when right after, for a similar teaching ("Any': to include the beetle, called *escarbot* in French, and what resembles those that resemble them"), Rashi only quotes the necessary word, "Any"?!?

(ii) So too, by the Rashi "Any" of the, "And any that walks on four," we have the same questions as in (ib) and in (ic)?

(iii) Concerning the, "To any that has many legs," it is understood why Rashi cannot just state, "This is the centipede," and give its French name, because there are many *creeping creatures* that have more than four legs! Hence, Rashi has to explain why the verse is speaking specifically of the centipede, "a creature with legs from its head to its tail, on either side," and Rashi then strengthens his proof by, "and they call it 'centipede' [in French]," which means, "A hundred (*centi*) legs (*pede*)," thus, being the creature -Cont. on Page 2

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2023 כג' ניסן תשפ"ג

Shabbat Candle Lighting: 7:25 PM · Kabbalat Shabbat: 7:15 PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2023 כד' ניסן תשפ"ג

TORAH READING: [Shemini](#) (Leviticus 9:1-11:47) · HAFTORAH: [Samuel II](#) (6:1-19)

[Shabbat Mevorchim](#) · [Shacharit](#): 9:30 AM · [Mincha](#): 7:00 PM · [Shabbat Ends](#): N. Miami: 8:19 PM

This Week...

The "Goes on Goichen" Creature -Cont. from Page 1

called, "that has many legs," in the Torah! However, why does Rashi not comment here, "'Any': to include similar to a centipede and similar to those similar to it," as the Talmud (-ibid) does?!

The Explanation: Being that the only creepy creature the Torah refers to as, "Goes on his goichen," is the serpent, and the only creepy creature that, "walks on four," is the scorpion, then why didn't the Torah just call them *Serpent* and *Scorpion*, and from the word "Any" by each, we would have *added on* all *creepy creatures* that are similar to the serpent and to the scorpion?! Hence, we must say that the Torah does not want us to *add on* any *creepy creature* that is similar to the serpent or to the scorpion in any way, but only those that are similar to the serpent's being, "Goes on its goichen¹," and to the scorpion's being, "Goes on four"!

- (ia) This explains why Rashi cannot define the word *goichen* as *The Targum's* simple meaning of the word, *Stomach*, because the, "'Any that go': to include...," would then mean, similar to the serpent's, "goes on its stomach," and if so, why not just simply write, "all that go on their stomach," without the need for the *add on* from, "Any"?! Hence, Rashi has to define what is the attribute that is only by the serpent: "that which walks bent down and then falls upon its belly," meaning that the serpent *first* goes as, "bent down," after which, it then, "falls upon the belly." Now, the, "'Any that go': to include earthworms and what resembles those that resemble them," are those which to begin with, "go on their belly," and don't first go as, "bent down".
- (ib) And this explains why Rashi doesn't use the Talmud's language, "'Any' ...and similar to an earthworm," but the *Torat Kohanim's* version of, "...what resembles those that resemble them," because: (1) the "Any" is not adding on that which is, "similar (types of) to a serpent," but specifically similar to, "goes on its goichen, while (2) even the earthworm isn't exactly similar to the, "first goes as, 'bent down,'" of the, "goes on goichen," but only to the "goes on its belly," part. So too, the, "what resembles those that resemble them," refers not to the *creepy creatures* that are specifically, "similar to the earthworm," but rather, just loosely, "what resembles those that resemble them."
- (ic) Hence, we know that this "Any" (which is not specifically similar to the serpent ("first goes bent down"), but is somewhat similar ("goes on its belly")) is not just adding on one, "similar to the serpent ("goes on goichen")," but also, "what resembles those that resemble them."
- (id) This is why Rashi includes "(Any) that go," in the heading², since specifically, "that go (on its belly)," is what defines the *similarity* and the *resembles* (no other *creepy creature* "Bends Down") included in the *add on* of "Any".
- (ii) With the scorpion too, the verse is looking to *add on* specifically the *creepy creatures* that (1) are not exactly, "walk on four, since only the scorpion is a *creepy creature* that has "four legs", but rather, (2) the "Any" comes to *add on* those *creepy creatures* that have more than "four legs", but use 'primarily' only "Four Legs" of those more than four legs to walk! Hence, the reasoning of answers (ib) and (ic) apply to the similar questions upon the, "Any" of the, "And any that walks on four".
- (iii) Being that the first two cases of this verse ("Goes on goichen" and "Goes on four") speak of only one creature (*Serpent* and *Scorpion*), hence, we must say that the "that has many legs," also speaks of only one creature (*centipede*), and here, where the *centipede* is not the only *creepy creature* with "many legs" --unlike only the serpent being called, "goes on goichen," and the scorpion being the only *creepy creature* that has *four legs*, therefore, this "Any" *adds on* the *creepy creatures* that are "as varieties" of "many legs", as in all the other cases of the kosher/ non-kosher species, hence, Rashi needn't make any specific comment about it.

The Lesson: Being that the serpent does end up, "goes on its belly," why does the verse describe it as, "the expression goichen denotes 'bending down,'" and not simply as, "goes on its belly"?! The serpent (-Zohar Vol I, 35b), "this is the Evil Inclination." And (-Shabbat 105b), "This is the craft of the Evil Inclination. Today it tells him do this, and tomorrow it tells him do that, until it tells him worship idols and he goes and worships." Meaning, that at first the serpent tells the person, "Walk upright, but with you head bent down, so that you don't (-Isaiah 40:26), 'Lift up your eyes on high and see, Who created these.'" Eventually, this will lead to, "and then falls upon its belly," to be self-absorbed, indulged and submerged in only, "crawling upon your belly," eating and drinking. The way to overcome the serpent is to be submerged in having, "your eyes on high," the study of Torah, and specifically the *Interior* (chassidus studies) of Torah, which prevents the, "Bent Down". As our sages (-Kidushin 30a) teach, "The (letter) vov of Gochoin is the half-mark of the letters of the Torah," upon which the MaRSh"A explains, "The letters of the Torah are all Names of G-d of the Hidden (teachings; chassidus) of the Torah, and being that the Primordial Serpent is the worst impurity, hence, the Torah stops (half-mark; not allowing the serpent to go any further) with the vov of gochoin, telling us that with the letters of the Torah, which are all the Names of G-d, there is no place for the power of impurity, for the vov of gochoin stops it!"

Chassidus explains (-Liku"t, Chukas, d"h Vayas Moshe), that (-Numbers 21:9), "Moses made a copper serpent and put it on a pole, and whenever a serpent bit a man, he would gaze... (-Rashi 21:8, "looked heavenward,") and live," was, "through seeing the Serpent of Holiness --which is the source of the Serpent of Impurity-- this would cause a refinement and transformation of the Serpent of Impurity." This is what the study of chassidus does! It shows one how (-Baba Basra 16a), "Satan ("serpent") for the sake of Heaven was its intention," because in its source, it is holy. Therefore, through the, "submerged in having, 'your eyes on high,' the study of the *Interior* (chassidus studies) of Torah," we transform the *Serpent of Impurity* into the *Serpent of Holiness*, bringing peace to Above and Below.

1. Which is why Rashi cannot define the word *goichen* as he did in Genesis, "the air that rushes forth from it," for there is no other *creepy creature* that is similar to, "the air that rushes forth from it," at all!
2. Not so with the, "Goes on four," since there are other creatures that, "walk mainly on four," and not on their other legs.