## Methodological Comments
by Major Torah Commentators

### Rashi on Gen. 3:8

There are many *aggadic midrashim* and they have already been ordered in their appropriate places in Bereshit Rabbah and in the rest of the Midrash collections; I, however, am only concerned with the *peshat* of Scripture and for the *aggadah* which establishes the words of Scripture in a fitting manner.

### Talmudic sources: Shabbat 63a, Yevamot 11b & 24a ("a verse is never to be deprived of its literal meaning"); Sanhedrin 34a ("one verse has several meanings; one meaning is not derived from several verses")

### Rashbam on Gen. 37:2

Those who love intellect will intellectualize and understand what the rabbis taught us, that Scripture does not depart from its *peshat*. Even though that essence of Torah comes to teach us and to make us aware by the hints of the *peshat* and the stories, and the laws and the rulings; and by means of the variants of language, and by means of the thirty-two hermeneutic rules of Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yose the Galilean, and by the thirteen hermeneutic rules of Rabbi Ishmael. The early commentators, on account of their great piety, were occupied with leaning towards the *derashot* that are the essence, and because of this they were not accustomed to the depths of the *peshat* of Scripture...Even our teacher Solomon, the father of my mother, illuminator of the eyes of the exiled, had in mind to explain the *peshat* of Scripture. I, Samuel the son of Rabbi Meir, his grandson, even argued with him and before him and he admitted to me that if he had the time, he would need to make different interpretations according to the *peshat* approaches that are being developed every day.
Rashbam on Genesis 1:1

Those who are learned will understand that all the words of our rabbis and their interpretations are truthful and correct. This is what is stated in Tractate Shabbat [63a]: “I was eighteen years old and I did not know that the Scripture does not depart from its peshat.” And the essence of the law and the interpretations comes from extraneous readings or a change of language, because the peshat of Scripture is written in language such that it is possible to learn from it the essence of the interpretation, as in “This is the history of the heavens and the earth in their creation [be-hibar'am], and the sages interpreted, “by Abraham” [be-Avraham], according to the variance of the language, because it is not necessary to write by their creation. Presently I will explain the interpretations of earlier commentators on this verse, to announce to people why I did not see fit to interpret as they did.

Rashbam on Exodus 21:1

Those endowed with intelligence will know and understand that I do not come to explain laws although they are the essence, as I explained in Genesis, because excess readings are heard in stories and laws, and a few of them are to be found in the commentary of our teacher Solomon, the father of my mother, may the memory of the righteous be a blessing. But I come to explain the peshat of the texts and the rulings and laws that can be [understood] according to common sense. Even so, the laws are essential, as our rabbis said: law uproots teaching.

Ibn Ezra

The considered judgment is the foundation, For the Torah was not given to one who does not possess understanding, And the intermediary between man and his God is his intellect.

And every matter that the intellect will not disavow— In its simple and legal sense we will interpret it, And we will situate ourselves according to its form,
And accept that this is its truth
And not grasp around like the blind for a wall,
But according to our need we will draw out the words,
Because why should we turn the visible into the concealed?

But if there are places where they are truly attached,
And both are faithful and clear,
Both of the like of bodies and of thoughts,
Like the circumcision of flesh and the circumcision of the hearts.

And in the Tree of Knowledge a secret will be pleasing,
These things too are truth according to their meaning.

**Ibn Ezra on Gen. 22:4**

The rabbis said: when Isaac was bound he was thirty-three years old. If this is the way of tradition, then we shall accept it. But if by way of conjecture, [we accept it only] if it is correct.

**Ramban**

It appears that the Torah, which is written with black fire upon white fire...the writing was continuous without spacing between words, and it was possible in reading it that you read by way of [combined] names; or that you read by our way of reading in regard to the matters of the Torah and the commandments. It was given to Moses our Teacher by way of reading the commandments, and was transmitted to him orally how to read it by [combined] names...just as in the manner of the Qabbalists.

**amban on Genesis 1:1**

But if you merit to understand the secret of the word *be-reshit* (*in the beginning*), and why it does not precede and say “God created *in the beginning,*” know that by way of truth the text speaks of lower matters but hints at higher matters. The word *be-reshit* hints at Wisdom, which is the beginning of beginnings, as I have mentioned. Thus the Targum Yerushalmi translates [it] *be-hokhmata,* “with wisdom.”

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<td>רמב&quot;ן, הקדמה לתורה Commentary</td>
<td>ורｚ&quot;ל אמרו: כשנעקד יצחק היה בן ל&quot;ז שנה. ואם מדרך קבלה נקבל. ומדרך סברא, אם זה נכון.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ramban</strong></td>
<td>נראתה השתנהו הכונתה בਸתורת על בשורה על עב איש...והיيف אוורחה צורת שלה הפסקitat, והיה א исполни הקדישתו שטרקאר על דר השמוא. ותקיא על דר קראתוניכ בים תחתורה המ ObjectType, ויתנה למשה רבינו על דר קראת המצות, ומסイメージ על פד קראתה בשמתך...כפי שהושמע עלכל הקבלא</td>
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<td><strong>amban on Genesis 1:1</strong></td>
<td>אבל אם תזכה ותבין סוד מלת בְּרֵאשִׁית, ולמה לא לקדם לומ &quot;אֱלָֹקִים בָּרָּא בְּרֵאשִׁית&quot;, תדע כי על דר אֹאמְתַּה הכותב ינדי בחתונים ינימי בעלונים. ו لماذا בריאת תמות בحلم, שחליא אֶשְׁפתא האישים,.CV תורמות. כלב תורמות.</td>
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