

Whatever mitzvos women are exempt from observing, non-Jewish slaves are exempt from observing as well.

Since Rashi is explaining why Tevi slept under the bed—namely, because he was exempt from the mitzvah of sukkah—why did Rashi choose to mention the former formulation, rather than the latter?

SHMUEL NEIMAN'S ANSWER

A fifteen-year-old Shmuel Neiman brilliantly answers his rebbi's question by noting that this Rashi follows the approach of another Rashi elsewhere.

The Mishnah and Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 33a) discuss the permissibility of allowing a woman to blow shofar on Shabbos. Rabbi Yehudah is of the opinion that women should be restricted from blowing the shofar when Rosh Hashanah coincides with Shabbos.

Rashi adds that according to Rabbi Yehudah, since women are not obligated to blow shofar on Shabbos, they are actually forbidden to do so. This is because the act would constitute a violation of the prohibition of בל תוסיף —“You shall not add to the commandments that I have commanded you.”

Shmuel explains that Rashi in Sukkah was troubled by the following question: Why did Tevi sleep under the bed when he could have slept properly in the sukkah and fulfilled the mitzvah as someone who is not commanded to do so? The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 31a) states that one who performs a mitzvah because he is commanded is greater than one who performs a mitzvah without having been commanded. Nevertheless, it is clear that one who performs a mitzvah without having been commanded still receives reward.

The question, then, is: Why would Tevi not have attempted to fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah, even though he was not obligated?

Rashi answers by stating, “And whatever mitzvos women are **obligated** to observe, non-Jewish slaves are **obligated** to observe as well.” Rashi is alluding to the fact that women are obligated in the prohibition of בל תוסיף, and whatever women are obligated in, slaves are obligated in as well. Therefore, had Tevi slept properly in the sukkah, he would have violated the prohibition of בל תוסיף.

REAL SOURCE

Rav Chizkiyahu Feivel Plaut (*Lekutei Chaver ben Chaim*, Volume 9) mentions the same question: Why did Rashi choose to state, “And whatever mitzvos women are **obligated** to observe, non-Jewish slaves are **obligated** to observe as well,” rather than stating the inverse formulation regarding the **exemptions**?

He answers that Rashi chose to emphasize the obligation because there is an explicit Torah source obligating slaves in mitzvos—namely, the *gezeirah shavah* of *lah lah* (*Gittin* 39b). The inverse principle—that slaves are exempt from whatever women are exempt from—is merely the byproduct of that *gezeirah shavah*.

Editor's note: It remains unclear whether Rav Plaut's answer depends on the well-known debate among the Acharonim regarding the nature of the *gezeirah shavah* of *lah lah*. Namely, would one have initially assumed that a slave is obligated in all mitzvos (like an ordinary Jew), with the *gezeirah shavah* limiting his obligations to those of a woman? Or would one have assumed that a slave is completely exempt from all mitzvos (like a non-Jew), with the *gezeirah shavah* obligating him specifically in the mitzvos observed by women?

ר' חזקיהו
פייבל
פלויט

R' Chizkiyahu Feivel Plaut (24 Shevat 1817 – 26 Kislev 1894) was a student of the Chasam Sofer and eventually Rav of Shurin for fifty years where he opened a yeshivah. Starting from 1878 he published eleven *sefarim* on many topics. Many of his contemporaries quote him, including the Maharam Shick, R' Yehudah Assad, and the Ksav Sofer. He writes, “With His kindness, I have reached old age, but I have not merited to have children. Therefore, I decided to give my parents an eternal name among the Jewish people by writing this *sefer*.” He explains that since the entire idea of publishing a *sefer* was for his parents' sake, he decided to name it after them as well.

In memory of Adam L. Rosen ((אברהם ליבוש בן יבלחטו"א ישראל ופערעל))

Adam Rosen was a pure soul who on occasion attended my shiurim. He lit up the room.

When Adam was barely two years old, his parents entrusted him to a housekeeper. What they did not yet know was that she was extremely careless, repeatedly placing the toddler in dangerous situations. One day, the mother came home unexpectedly and saw it with her own eyes. There was no discussion, no negotiation. She looked at the woman and said simply, “You're fired.” The housekeeper gathered her things and left.

Months later, in a moment that caught his parents entirely off guard, young Adam looked up at his mother and asked, in all innocence, “Why did you burn the housekeeper?” It took a moment to understand what he meant. To a small child, the word *fired* was taken literally.

The lesson stayed with them. Words, even casually spoken, are never just words, and a phrase that passes unnoticed among adults can lodge itself deeply and differently in a young mind.

May we be more careful with what we say, and may our learning be an *aliyah* for his *neshamah*.