From Elie Wiesel, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, comes a magical book that introduces us to the towering figure of Rashi—Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki—the great biblical and Talmudic commentator of the Middle Ages.

Wiesel brilliantly evokes the world of medieval European Jewry, a world of profound scholars and closed communities ravaged by outbursts of anti-Semitism and decimated by the Crusades. The incomparable scholar Rashi, whose phrase-by-phrase explication of the oral law has been included in every printing of the Talmud since the fifteenth century, was also a spiritual and religious leader: His perspective, encompassing both the mundane and the profound, is timeless.

Wiesel’s Rashi is a heartbroken witness to the suffering of his people, and through his responses to major religious questions of the day we see still another side of this greatest of all interpreters of the sacred writings.

Both beginners and advanced students of the Bible rely on Rashi’s groundbreaking commentary for simple text explanations and Midrashic interpretations. Wiesel, a descendant of Rashi, proves an incomparable guide who enables us to appreciate both the lucidity of Rashi’s writings and the milieu in which they were formed.
My Personal Review:

A Master on a Master

Amos Lassen

Elie Wiesel is a name that many of us quickly identify with the Holocaust but he has written other books as well and Rashi is one of the best of them. This is a personal look at Rashi, commentator of the Torah and scholar. Rashi was able to read a text and find the hidden meanings and I, like Wiesel, am mystified by both Rashi the man and his levels of interpretation.

Rashi was Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak, a great Biblical and Talmud commentator who lived during the Middle Ages and Wiesel takes us back to medieval Jewish history where scholars lived in closed communities which were torn asunder by anti-Semitism. Rashi was the true scholar of the period. He managed to look at the Torah (The Five Books of Moses) and give a phrase-by-phrase explication and explanation of what is written. His thoughts have been included in the Talmud (the written law) ever since the fifteenth century and they are profound. He was a witness to the heartbreak of a people who suffered at the hands of others and is still considered to be the greatest interpreter of the word of the Torah. Many rely upon Rashi's ideas.

Wiesel, himself, is a descendant of Rashi and this is the personal link Wiesel gives us a loving portrait of Rashi and shows how his own life was influenced by the great sage.

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