

Ohev Mishpat – Commentary on Job by R. Simeon ben Zemah Duran
(1361-1444)

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This article seeks to characterize and describe the interpretative approach developed by R. Simeon ben Zemah Duran (better known as the author of *Tashbez*) in his commentary on Job. *Ohev Mishpat* is composed of two sections. The first section, composed of 38 chapters, offers a manner of introduction to the Book of Job, discussing principles of faith and focusing in particular on the notion of Divine providence. In this section, the author also presents his understanding of Job's sin and the contentions voiced by Job's friends. The second section presents an extensive and in-depth commentary on the verses of the Book of Job, utilizing a very broad range of hermeneutical tools. Despite their length and complexity, the extreme clarity of formulation makes these passages eminently accessible.

R. Simeon ben Zemah Duran's objective was not to innovate or offer his own unique reading. Rather, he sought to offer a variety of ways the verses could be understood in their plain sense [*peshat*], to discuss those interpretations, and to explore their correspondence with the lexical meaning of the words within the grammatical structure of the verse and the wider semantic context in which they appear. While the most evident aspect of his commentary is surely the extensive citations from earlier commentators, Nahmanides in particular, this work is by no means a mere collection of the views of others. Rather, *Ohev Mishpat* must be seen as an original composition, carefully integrating and building on the insights of others.