

The Rashi Database Project

NEW AND IMPROVED

GOALS: * Show that all Rashid comments are spontaneous, instant, effortless reactions of a native speaker to the biblical text.

*This is accomplished by skillful English translations instantly suggesting the Rashid comment to the reader

* Additionally, each Rashid comment is examined using the 10 organs of the Rashid anatomy.

PUBLICATION: www.Rashibyomi.com/RashiDatabase.htm

(MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY): DT = Doctoral Thesis (www.Rashiyomi.com/Rashibook.htm,

MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashid (www.Rashiyom.com/Rashibook2.htm))

OTHER COMMENTATORS (ABBREVIATIONS): R=Ramban, T=Baal Turim, K=Kli Yakar, I=Ibn Ezra, H=Hendel

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DATE/AUTHOR: Sep 3rd, 2023, Russell Jay Hendel DSJS, Ph.D.

RASHI ID: Gn44-19a, Gn44-20a, Gn44-20b, Gn44-22a, Gn44-29a, Gn44-29b, Gn44-30a

PESHAT: SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

WHAT IS NEW: *This week's digest reviews a Ramban-Rashi dialogue. We claim that Ramban was not disagreeing with Rashi but clarifying Rashi. The key to today's analysis is the realization that both Rashi and Ramban were commenting on paragraph structure.*

TODAYS CHALLENGING RASHIS

VERSE: Gn44-18--Gn44-34

METHOD: Paragraph Development

CITATION OF BIBLICAL TEXT:

Then Judah came near to him, and said, Oh my lord, let your servant, I beg you, speak a word in my lords ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant; for you are as Pharaoh.

My lord asked his servants, saying, Have you a father, or a brother?

And we said to my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.

And you said to your servants, Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes upon him. And we said to my lord, The lad can not leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And you said to your servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, you shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We can not go down; if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man' s face, except our youngest brother be with us. And your servant my father said to us, You know that my wife bore me two sons And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since; And if you take this also from me, and harm befall him, you shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Hell Now therefore when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lads life; It

shall come to pass, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and your servants shall bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol.

For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, If I bring him not to you, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I beg you, let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest perhaps I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Explanation of Rashi and Ramban:

The dialogue of Judah to Joseph, must be read as an entire paragraph to understand it. Both Rashi and Ramban comment on the paragraph structure: We do not perceive Ramban as *disagreeing* with Rashi but as *clarifying* Rashi; that is, we argue that Rashi would agree with what Ramban says. In this case Ramban is more verbose in his commentary while Rashi is terser

To understand a paragraph we must understand its *theme* and *development*. The *theme* of the paragraph is *Judah's offer to replace Benjamin as Joseph's slave* as punishment for the theft of Joseph's magic cup. To understand the development we must first offer a model of Joseph in Judah's mind. Joseph had jailed all 12 brothers, swore by Pharaoh that only one brother would be allowed to return, who upon returning with Benjamin would affirm the brother's claim that they had a brother and free them. But then, Joseph says, *I fear God*. He retracts, and jails only one of them, letting the other 10 return. Thus Judah has a model of Joseph as a hot-tempered person who however believed in God and could calm down and modify his statements.

Judah therefore begins developing the paragraph theme with (1) *You (Joseph) are like Pharaoh*. Here Judah appeals to Joseph's sense of fear of God since it is so befitting a King. Rashi cites a Midrash that a former Pharaoh was punished with leprosy for taking Sarah and this is consistent with Joseph's (1) *I fear God*

Judah's second development point is Joseph's questioning: *Do you have a father or brother?* (2) Rashi and Ramban cite a Midrash that Joseph was seeking machinations. Ramban brilliantly points out that Judah couldn't have been accusing Joseph of doing this to being with since when Benjamin came, Joseph blessed him and gave him extra gifts. So the Midrash's statement, cited by Rashi, but elaborated on by Ramban, must be re-interpreted, as Ramban points, out as paragraph development: *Your questioning of us was peculiar to being with since you don't question everyone who comes down here.*

A 3rd development point is that the brother's responded to Joseph's questions which as Rashi points out (3) shows *a willingness to cooperate*.

A 4th and main development point is that (4) *retaining Benjamin would kill their father from anguish*. Judah therefore cites the brother's initial refusal to bring him down and Jacob's initial refusal. Toward this end, Judah points out that Benjamin was the sole surviving brother of Joseph (Rashi); that other tragedies happened while traveling such as Rachel's death (Rashi) and that Jacob worried about his traveling since travel is accident prone (Rashi). Additionally, Jacob

personally stated the fear that an accident would happen. Ramban in fact ingeniously reads the verse *Your servants will bring down the old age of our father badly in hell as You Joseph by retaining Benjamin will bring down the old age of our father badly in hell*, the referral to responsibility on the brothers rather than on Joseph being a sign of respect for the monarchy.

Having developed the theme by pointing out (4) *the consequence of Jacob's death*, (1) *Joseph's fear of God* as well (3) as *Joseph's contribution to the whole matter by asking strange questions*, Judah picks up on (2) *their willingness to cooperate*. Judah concludes with the paragraph theme: *Let me replace Benjamin since I am superior to him in service, war, and strength*.

DATABASE ENTRIES

The Free Downloadable Excel based database is found at
http://www.Rashiyomi.com/The_Rashi_Database_Project.xls

VERSE: Gn44-19a
TRANSLATION: *Our master asked his servants [that is, us] as follows: Do you have a father or brother*
METHOD: Paragraph Context
BRIEF EXPLANATION: The dialogue of Judah to Joseph, must be read as an entire paragraph to understand it. Both Rashi and Ramban comment on the paragraph structure: We do not perceive Ramban as disagreeing with Rashi but as clarifying Rashi; that is, we argue that Rashi would agree with what Ramban says. In this case Ramban is more verbose in his commentary while Rashi is terser [Continued in Gn44-20a].

VERSE: Gn44-20a
TRANSLATION: *We said to our master, "Our father is elderly and we have a younger brother; his brother died and he alone remained to his mother"*
METHOD: Paragraph Context
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Continued from Gn44-20a] To understand a paragraph we must understand its theme and development. The theme of the paragraph is Judah's offer to replace Benjamin as Joseph's slave as punishment for the theft of Joseph's magic cup. To understand the development we must first offer a model of Joseph in Judah's mind. Joseph had jailed all 12 brothers, swore by Pharaoh that only one brother would be allowed to return, who upon returning with Benjamin would affirm the brother's claim that they had a brother and free them. But then, Joseph says, I fear God. He retracts, and jails only one of them, letting the other 10 return. Thus Judah has a model of Joseph as a hot-tempered person who however believed in God and could calm down and modify his statements. [Continued in Gn44-20b].

VERSE: Gn44-20b
TRANSLATION: *We said to our master, "Our father is elderly and we have a younger brother; his brother died and he alone remained to his mother"*
METHOD: Paragraph Context
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Continued from Gn44-20b] Judah therefore begins developing the paragraph theme with (1) You (Joseph) are like Pharaoh. Here Judah appeals to Joseph's sense of fear of God since it is so befitting a King. Rashi cites a Midrash that a former Pharaoh was punished with leprosy for taking Sarah and this is consistent with Joseph's (1) I fear God.[Continued in Gn44-22a].

VERSE: Gn44-22a
TRANSLATION: *We said to our master, "The lad cannot leave his father; for if he left his father he might die"*
METHOD: Paragraph Context
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Continued from Gn44-22a] Judah's second development point is Joseph's questioning: Do you have a father or brother? (2) Rashi and Ramban cite a Midrash that Joseph was seeking machinations. Ramban brilliantly points out that Judah couldn't have been accusing Joseph of doing this to being with since when Benjamin came, Joseph blessed him and gave him extra gifts. So the Midrash's statement, cited by Rashi, but elaborated on by Ramban, must be re-interpreted, as Ramban points, out as paragraph development: Your questioning of us was peculiar to being with since you don't question everyone who comes down here.[Continued in Gn44-29a].

VERSE: Gn44-29a
TRANSLATION: *And if you take this [child] from me, there will be an accident, and you will bring down my elder years badly to hell.*
METHOD: Paragraph Context
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Continued from Gn44-29a] A 3rd development point is that the brother's responded to Joseph's questions which as Rashi points out (3) shows a willingness to cooperate. [Continued in Gn44-29b].

VERSE: Gn44-29b
TRANSLATION: *And if you take this [child] from me, there will be an accident, and you will bring down my elder years badly to hell.*
METHOD: Paragraph Context

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

[Continued from Gn44-29b] A 4th and main development point is that (4) retaining Benjamin would kill their father from anguish. Judah therefore cites the brother's initial refusal to bring him down and Jacob's initial refusal. Toward this end, Judah points out that Benjamin was the sole surviving brother of Joseph (Rashi); that other tragedies happened while traveling such as Rachel's death (Rashi) and that Jacob worried about his traveling since travel is accident prone (Rashi). Additionally, Jacob personally stated the fear that an accident would happen. Ramban in fact ingeniously reads the verse Your servants will bring down the old age of our father badly in hell as You Joseph by retaining Benjamin will bring down the old age of our father badly in hell, the referral to responsibility on the brothers rather than on Joseph being a sign of respect for the monarchy. [Continued in Gn44-30a].

VERSE:

Gn44-30a

TRANSLATION:

When my father sees the lad is not with us, [he] will die from anguish

METHOD:

Paragraph Context

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

[Continued from Gn44-30a] Having developed the theme by pointing out (4) the consequence of Jacob's death, (1) Joseph's fear of God as well (3) as Joseph's contribution to the whole matter by asking strange questions, Judah picks up on (2) their willingness to cooperate. Judah concludes with the paragraph theme: Let me replace Benjamin since I am superior to him in service, war, and strength.