

The Rashi Database Project

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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RASHI ID: Lv09-22a, Lv09-22b, Lv09-23b, Lv09-24a, Lv10-02a, Lv10-03a, Lv10-03c, Lv10-03d

PESHAT: SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

WHAT IS NEW: Lots of Good Rashis today. We chose the one below since it offers a novel interpretation of a difficult Midrash. However, the digest also contains a Rashi-Ramban controversy, as well as the approach I presented in my Doctoral Thesis on dealing with multiple Midrashic interpretation.

Lv10-03a Moses said to Aaron (upon the death of his sons), this is what God had said: Through my close ones I will sanctify myself and thereby gain honor on the nation, and Aaron was silent.

Rashi Rule: Generalization

Rashi Comment: Rashi on this verse is very strange apparently violating grammatical rules. Here is the literal translation of what he says.

The close ones refers to those God has chosen for honor. The word *this* in *this is what God has said*, refers to Ex29-43, *I will designate that place (the altar) for the Jewish people, and become sanctified in my honor.* Rashi following the Talmud suggests an emendation of the word *honor*: *I will designate that place (the altar) for the Jewish people and become sanctified in my honorees (those I honor).* (The resulting verse, twisted out of context by the re-reading, seems to suggest that God acquires honor and holiness through those like Priests whom he honors) (Moses continues) I thought perhaps this would refer to you or me; but now that it happens through your sons I see they are greater than us since God chose to honor himself through their death rather than our death.

When God punishes those close to him (whom he has chosen and given honor to) God himself becomes honored to the rest of the nation who reason, *If God punishes even those close and honored by him how much more so do we have to be careful not to violate His laws.*

There are several problems with this Rashi if taken literally.

- It implies (or says) that Aaron's children were *greater* than Moses and Aaron. But that is not

true. As we have seen in Lv10-02a, they were arrogant, isolated themselves from the nation, had a substance abuse problems, and engaged in improper behaviors.

- It seems to imply that God might have a higher standard on those whom he honors which is rather scary. The gist of Lv10-02a is that they died because they offered an inappropriate offering; this standard (death for inappropriate offerings) applies to anyone
- Finally, we point out, that there is no justification for re-writing *my honor* as *my honorees*. But we emphasize, that this re-writing is not what bothers us; it bothers us more that Moses claimed that Aaron's sons were great people when they had severe problems and that their punishment reflected their higher status neither of which is true.

My own approach to this verse which I have not found anywhere else, is that the text teaches us how to comfort mourners, in this case, Moses comforted Aaron on the loss of his sons. The text teaches us by example, that it is permissible to exaggerate (calling Aaron's children righteous), and it is permissible to twist verses out of their straightforward meaning for purposes of comforting the mourner. This is an important moral principle.

There are precedents for the Bible teaching us to lie or distort truths for the sake of peace. Two notable examples are:

- (i) God's mis-citation of Sarah's statement cited in Gn18-12 (*I am going to have a child when I am old and withered and my husband is old?*); in Gn18-13 God cites Sarah as saying (*I who am old am having a child?*) and omitted or changed Sarah's statement that her husband was old. This of course was done for the sake of peace that Abraham should not know that Sarah said that.
- (ii) The brother's citation of Jacob that Jacob asked Joseph to forgive his brothers (Gn50-16:17) which is seems fabricated (it is not supported by any text) and doesn't make sense (if Jacob had so commanded he would have told Joseph directly).

In summary, I believe this Rashi is teaching us the permissibility when comforting mourners, to exaggerate, to erase the wrongs of the deceased, and possibly to support their consoling statements with twisted interpretations of verses. While this interpretation of mine is novel and not found elsewhere, I believe it consistent with similar approaches to Midrash and also supported halachically.

TODAYS CHALLENGING RASHIS DATABASE ENTRIES

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

VERSE:

Lv09-22a

TRANSLATION: *Aaron lifted his hands towards the nation and blessed them; he then went down after completing the sin and peace offerings Moses & Aaron...They blessed the nation and the honor of God appeared to the entire nation A fire went forth from God and consumed the elevation offering and the fats; the nation saw and murmured in praise*

METHOD: Parallelism, Bullets, Word Meaning, Reading Literacy,
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Lv09-22a](#)

VERSE: Lv09-22b
TRANSLATION: *See Lv09-22a*
METHOD: *See Lv09-22a*
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Lv09-22a](#)

VERSE: Lv09-23b
TRANSLATION: *See Lv09-22a*
METHOD: *See Lv09-22a*
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Lv09-22a](#)

VERSE: Lv09-24a
TRANSLATION: *See Lv09-22a*
METHOD: *See Lv09-22a*
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Lv09-22a](#)

VERSE: Lv10-02a
TRANSLATION: *The descendants of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each took his staff, and put fires and incense on them, they then offered a foreign fire that (God) had not commanded them. A fire went forth from God and consumed them; they died in the presence of God*

METHOD: Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Lv10-02a](#)

VERSE: Lv10-03a

TRANSLATION: *Moses said to Aaron, this is what God had said: Through my close ones I will sanctify myself and thereby gain honor on the nation, and Aaron was silent.*

METHOD: Generalization

BRIEF [Lv10-03a](#)

EXPLANATION:

VERSE: Lv10-03c

TRANSLATION: *See Lv10-03a*

METHOD:

BRIEF [Lv10-03a](#)

EXPLANATION:

VERSE: Lv10-03d

TRANSLATION: *See Lv10-03a*

METHOD:

BRIEF [Lv10-03a](#)

EXPLANATION: