

## I. Similarities:

### A. Dual Exegesis

Rashi to: Gen. 3, 8: **AND THEY HEARD** – There are many Midrashic explanations and our Teachers have already collected them in their appropriate places in Genesis Rabbah and in other Midrashim. I, however, am only concerned with the plain sense of Scripture and with such Agadoth that explain the words of Scripture in a manner that fits in with them.

### B. Sources: Talmud, Midrash, Targum, Spanish Grammarians

## II. Differences:

### A. Dual Track

#### 1. Percentages

Avraham Grossman: "About a quarter of the commentary on the Torah is original material; in the commentaries on Nakh, the figure is about two-thirds, the amount varying with the nature of each book and its commentary." (Rashi, p. 111)

#### Why the difference?

#### 2. Source Material

No Halakhic material on Nakh; Fewer & Shorter Aggadic Compendiums

רש"י למגילה כא ע"ב, ועשרה מתרגמין- לא גרסינן שאין תרגום בכתובים.

#### 3. More Nuanced Exegetical Labels

Torah: roots: Peshat/Mashma vs. Midrash

Nakh: roots: Peshat/Mashma/Melitzah vs. Midrash/Dugma/Mashal

רש"י, משלי יט, טו: עצלה תפיל תרדמה – העצילות מביאה לידי שינה, זו היא המליצה, אבל המשל על שהוא מתעצל בתלמוד, סופו כששואלין ממנו דבר חכמה הרי הוא כנרדם.

רש"י, שיר השרים א, ב: כי טובים – לי דודיך מכל משתה יין – מכל עונג ושמחה. ולשון עברי הוא להיות כל סעודת עונג ושמחה נקראת על שם היין... זהו ביאור משמעו. ונאמר דוגמא: על שם שנתן להם תורתו ודבר עמהם פנים אל פנים...

### B. Deepening of the Understanding of Peshat

#### a. Isaac Maarsen on Rashi to Psalms (1936)

"ואולי לא נחטיא את המטרה אם נגזר שלעת זקנתו כתבו או לכל הפחות בסוף מלאכתו הפרשנית עסק בספר הזה. ויש רמזים חשובים להשערה הזאת... נוסף על זאת הוא משפט הכללים אשר נמצא כאן באופן מתבלט יותר מבשאר ספרי תנ"ך. בעשרים ואחת מקומות מביא "כללי"... כל לשון הנה (א, ג), כל בינה (ה, ב), כל רדיפה (ז, ד) ... שימוש הכללים הוא אמצעי חשוב להבנת המקרא לפי פשוטו. על הדרך הלזו שם פעמיו ג"כ כאשר יפרש המשך הפסוקים והראה איך הם משולבים זה בזה והאופן הזה רגיל הוא בין הפשטנים..."

#### b. Pesukei D'Shmu'el

## ימי עיון בתנ"ך תשפ"ב

Rashi to Shemot 15,6: **Your right hand, your right hand-** 1. Twice, when Israel performs the will of G-d, the left becomes right. **Your right hand G-d is majestic in might-** to save Israel, and your second right hand crushes the enemy. 2. But it appears to me that the very right hand crushes the enemy that which is impossible for a man to do, to perform two tasks with one hand. 3. But the simplest meaning of the verse is: Your right hand which is majestic in might, what is it's

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work? "Your right hand crushes the enemy." And there are many verses like it. "For behold your enemies O G-d, for behold your enemies will be destroyed" (Ps. 92: 10); "How long will the wicked O G-d, how long will the wicked rejoice" (Ps. 94: 3)..

Manuscript evidence

רשב"ם שמות פרק טו: (ו) ימינך י"י – שאתה נאדרי בכה, היא תרעץ אויב.. ומקרא זה – כעין 'נשאו נהרות י"י' נשאו נהרות קולם' (תהי צג, ג). 'עד מתי רשעים י"י עד מתי רשעים יעלוזו' (תהי צד, ג); 'כי הנה אויבך י"י כי הנה אויבך יאבדו' (תהי צב, י). חציו הראשון אינו מסיים דבר, עד שיבא חציו האחרון וכופלו ומשלים דברו, אך בחציו הראשון מזכיר במי הוא מדבר:

כ"י בודלינא 271, עמ' 12א: כ"י של תוספות עה"ת לברי' מט, כב: "בן פורת יוסף- דרך הפסוק להתחיל דברו ואינו גומרו ואחר כך חוזר ומתחיל וגומר כגון 'נשאו נהרות ה'' ולא פירש מה נשאו ואחר כך מפרש 'נשאו נהרות קולם' וכן, 'ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח' ולא פירש מה תעשה, ואחר כך פירש 'תרעץ אויב' וכן, 'כי הנה אויבך ה''; כל זה מיסוד רבי שמואל וכשהיה רש"י [רבי שלמה זקנו] מגיע לפסוקים אילו היה [קורא אותם פסוקי שמואל] על שמו

**Baalei Hatosafot:** "... All this is from Rabbi Samuel's treatise, and when Rashi [ Rabbi Solomon his grandfather] came to one of these verses, he would refer to them as 'Samuel verses,' [in his name]."

c. Grandson's testimony

Rashbam, Gen. 37:2:...Similarly, Rabbi Solomon, my mother's father, who illumined the eyes of all the diaspora, who wrote commentaries on the Torah, Prophets, and Hagiographa, set out to explain the plain meaning of Scripture. However I, Samuel, son of his son-in-law, Meir – may the memory of the righteous be a blessing – [often] disputed [his interpretations] with him to his face. He admitted to me that, if only he had had the time, he would have written new [revised] commentaries, based on the insights into the plain meaning of Scripture that are newly thought of day by day.

### C. Anti-Christian Polemics

Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Does Rashi's Torah Commentary respond to Christianity? A Comparison of Rashi with Rashbam and Bekhor Shor," *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James Kugel*, Leiden (2004).

"In any case, however it is explained, there is a disparity between Rashi on the Torah and Rashi on Psalms.

Rashi on Psalms, like Rashbam and Bekhor Shor on the Torah, refutes Christian exegesis and Christian truth claims, but Rashi on the Torah does not. Does Rashi's Torah commentary respond to Christianity? In the absence of any evidence that it did, the answer must be that it did not." (p. 472).

#### a. Minim

(1) Torah:

Rashi to Gen. 1, 26: **Let us make man** – Although they did not assist Him in forming him, and [although this use of the plural] may give the **heretics/minim** an occasion to rebel, yet the verse does not refrain from teaching proper conduct & humility, namely, that the greater should consult, and take permission from the smaller; for had it been written, "I shall make man", we could not, then, have learned that He spoke to His judicial council but to Himself...

Rashi's source:

## ימי עיון בתנ"ך תשפ"ב

**Breishit Rabbah 8, 8:** R' Shmuel b. Nahman said: ...'And G-d said: Let us make man, etc.'. He said: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why do you offer an excuse to **heretics/ minim**: 'Write,' he replied; 'whoever wishes to err may err.' 'Moses,' said the Lord to him, 'this man that I have created- do I not cause men both great and small to spring from him? Now if a great man comes to obtain permission from one that is less than he, he may say, "Why should I ask permission from my inferior!" Then they will answer him, "Learn from your Creator... who took counsel with the ministering angels...'

(2) Nakh:

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**Rashi to Ps. 21,2: The king rejoices in your strength-** Our Rabbis interpreted it as a reference to King Messiah, but it is correct to interpret it as a reference to David himself **as a refutation of the heretics/le-teshuvat ha-minim** who became bold because of it.

**Rashi to Daniel 12,10: and the wicked will pervert-** the calculations by computing them incorrectly, & when they terminate, they will say that there is no more redemption, such as *the minim*, the students of Jesus of Nazareth (no source)

### b. Case Study: In Praise of Esau

Torah

#### A. Filial Devotion

##### **Passive**

**Rashi: [The days of mourning for my father] approach** (Gen. 27:41)- in its plain sense/כמשמעו so as not to aggrrieve father, but the homiletic explanations are various.

##### **Active**

1. **Rashi** (Gen. 27:): **Which were with her in the house** (Gen. 27:15)- But he had several wives and yet he stored them with his mother? But [the reason for this was] that he was acquainted with their practice and was suspicious of them.

**Gen. Rabbah 65:16:** [a] **Which were with her in the house-** in these he used to attend upon his father.

**R' Simeon b. Gamliel said:** All my lifetime I attended upon my father, yet I did not do for him a hundredth part of the service which Esau did for his father. I used to attend my father in soiled garments and go out in the street in clean ones; but when Esau attended on his father, he attended upon him in royal robes. "For," said he "nought but royal robes befits my father's honor. [b] **Which were with her in the house-** How many wives he had, yet you say, "Which were with her!" The fact is, however, that he knew their ways.

2. **Rashi** (Gen. 36:12)- **And Timna was concubine-** This is stated to tell you in what importance Abraham was held, how eager people were to attach themselves to his descendants...She said [to Eliphaz], "if I am unworthy of become your wife would that I might become your concubine..."

**Gen. Rabbah 82:14: And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son-** [a] R' Simon B. Yohai taught: What purpose is served by this verse? 'And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz.' It is to inform us of the greatness of the house of our father Abraham... She [Timna] said: Since I am not worthy of being his wife, let me be his handmaid. [b] Now may we not here draw a conclusion *a fortiori*: If kings ran to cleave to wicked Esau, who had to his credit but the one pious deed of honoring his father, how much more will they run to cleave to Jacob, who fulfilled the

whole Torah.

## B. Additional Praise

Rashi (Gen. 32:8) **He feared greatly and was distressed/ וַיִּירָא... וַיִּצְרַח** - **He was afraid**-lest he be slain, **and he was distressed**- that he might have to kill.

*Gen. Rabbah 76:2:* [a] **He was afraid**-lest he should be slain; **And was distressed**-lest he should slay.

[b] During all these years, thought he, he has dwelt in Eretz Yisrael; then perhaps he will attack me in virtue of his having dwelt in Eretz Yisrael. Again, during all these years he has duly honored his parents...

### **Rashi has removed all active merit**

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(1) Nakh

## A. Filial Devotion

1. **Isaiah 27:11:** Rashi: When its branches dry out - The branches of its roots... i.e., when the little merit that Edom has for honoring his father, is depleted, then its branches **shall be broken**. (contradicts his Talmudic commentary)

2. **Zechariah 2:12:** Rashi: After glory- after your glory I am sent to magnify your glory. And the Midrash Aggadah states: After the glory- After I pay Esau for the honor that he bestowed upon his father.

*Tanhuma Buber Addition to Deuteronomy 4:* (Deut. 2:3) *You have had enough of going out* (rt.: SBB) *this hill country (hahar)* < These words can and should mean:> He had his father (*hahar* understood as *horeh*) sit down to eat (rt.: SBB). **Esau greatly honored his father Isaac**. Rabban Simon ben Gamliel said: Esau honored <him> as I have been unable to honor my father. When I came to my father to serve him, I did not wear fine clothes, but Esau did not perform in the clothes which he wore outside, when he served his father. What did he do? He took off the garments in which he served and put on fine clothes...Ergo, he honored his father (*horo*) greatly. After I (i.e. the Holy One) repay (*pore'*) him for honoring his parents, I will exact vengeance (*pore'*) from him. Thus, it is stated "Thus says the Lord of Hosts after his glory sent me unto the nations that plundered you" (Zech, 3:12). But now: "You have had enough" (Deut. 2:3).

3. **Proverbs 30:28:** Rashi: The spider grasps with her hands- There is none hated among the detestable things like the *semamit*, this is Esau, "And I hate Esau," (Malachi 1:3). **It grasps with its hands**- "But the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 27:22), the hands allowed him. **In a king's palace**- he entered the Temple and destroyed it.

*Midrash Mishlei:* **The spider grasps with her hands**- This is Edom for there is none hated among the detestable things like her, and so it is written: "And I hate Esau," (Malachi 1:3)... **In a king's palace**- Edom that destroyed the Temple.

*Gen. Rabbah 66:7:* "Made delicacies; he said to his father, 'let my father rise, etc.'" (27, 31)- Thus it is written 'the spider takes hold with his hands' (Prov. 30:28). R' Chama bar Chanina said: In what merit does "the spider take hold?" In the merit of those hands, "he too made delicacies"/ ויעש גם הוא מטעמים.

## B. Other Merit: Zechut Avot

## ימי עיון בתנ"ך תשפ"ב

Rashi Psalms 80:14: The boar of the forest – ...He is Esau, as it is written: "It devoured and broke in pieces, and the rest it trampled with its feet" (Dan. 7:7). And it, (the swine) has some signs of purity. Esau, too, has the merit of his fathers. (no known source, contradicts other comments: Dev. 32, 9; Gen. 26,34)

### **Why the disparity between his Torah and Nakh Commentaries?**

Nature of the Biblical Books: In Genesis, the Esau story is part of the larger Esau-Jacob narrative. The villainization of Esau and removal of all merit deflects attention and criticism from Jacob. If Esau is a murderer and thief devoid of all merit, Jacob's offense is less severe, for defrauding a villain is less serious than defrauding an honest man.

Time Period: Commentaries to Latter Prophets & Hagiographa written later in Rashi's life and reflect the worsening conditions of 11<sup>th</sup> century Northern French/German Jewry (1096 First Crusade). In what merit does Christianity triumph? In the merit of Esau's positive deeds. But once that merit is depleted, Christianity will fall.