

Tā'ūfā kabbōqer tihyeh: The Vicissitudes of Rashi's Commentary to Job 11:17

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I should like to dedicate this article to the memory of Prof. Moshe Held, ז"ל, whose attachment to his students and his scholarship was reminiscent of the poignant attitude which Nachmanides adopted towards Abraham Ibn Ezra (both of whom Dr. Held revered): תוכחת מגולה ואהבה נסתרת (open reproof and concealed love).

A. *The Texts*

The standard Miqra'ot Gedolot text of Rashi to Job 11:17 reads:¹

תעופה. אפילה שלך כבקר תהיה. ע"א (ענין אחר) תעופה לשון עפעפי שחר שאם הוא לשון אופל היה לו לומר תעופה נקוד בשוא כמו תנופה תקומה תרומה תנומה.

This reading is problematic for two reasons: (a) The two interpretations contradict each other; and (b) What does the vocalization of the letter *tāw* have to do with the definition of the word (rather than with its part of speech)? In any event, this text is not substantially different from those of several other manuscripts, such as ms. Escorial G-II 14:²

תעופה שלך אפלך כבקר תהיה. ע"א תעופה לשון לשי' עפעפי שחר שאם הוא לשון אופל היה לו לומר' תעופה בשבא כמו תנופה תקומה.

1 According to the Warsaw edition. The essential text with some minor differences appears in ed. Venice 1548, and with yet other differences in ed. Venice 1607. On the general difficulty of establishing the correct text of Rashi's commentary on Job, see M. Sokolow, *PAAJR* 48 (1981), 19-35 [Hebrew]. (A brief description appears in the *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (1981), Division A: 139-43.)

2 The ms. bears the number 8816 in the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Mss., and carries the date 1227. Nearly identical versions are found in ms. Munich 5 (2525: dated 1233), and in ms. Bodleian Mich. 629 (33109: 14th century). The differences between the three are only in the grammatical forms cited as proofs. Note that in no two of the mss. we have cited here are the number and sequence of those forms identical.

3 Above the letters are signs for erasure.

In other manuscripts, however, other versions—even contradictory ones—appear. Ms. Bodleian Opp. 34, for instance, reads:⁴

תעופה שלך ואפלך כבקר תהיה. ואין לומר תעופה כמו עפעפי שחר שכן היה לו לומר 'תעופה' נקוד בשבא כמו תנופה תנומה תרומה תקומה.

while ms. Bodleian 142 reads:⁶

תעופה שלך ואפלך כבקר תהיה. ד"א (דבר אחר) תעופה לשון עפעפי שחר שאם הוא לש' אופל היה לו' תעופה נקוד בשבא. מצ' (מצאתי) ואין לומר תעופה כמו עפעפי שחר שכן היה לו לומר תעופה נקוד בשבא כמו תנופה תקומה תרומה תנומה.

B. The Analysis

After defining *tā'ūfā* as darkness (*ʿafēlā*), there appears a second, conflicting definition of light: *ʿaf'appē šaḥar*. The first manuscript we cited accepts the latter definition while noting, nevertheless, that it is a variant reading (*ʿinyān ʿaḥēr*). The second manuscript rejects the second definition while the third delivers both definitions, points out the reservations regarding each, and declines to decide between them. All the manuscripts point to the same grammatical phenomenon, i.e., the vocalization of *tā* rather than *tē*, as proof for their respective positions.⁷

Presuming that only one of the two contradictory definitions is actually Rashi's, we must establish three things: (1) which of the two is originally and authentically his; (2) why the original definition was set aside in favor of a later (and erroneous) definition; (3) what, indeed, is the origin and authority of that second definition.

(1) We may determine Rashi's original definition of *tā'ūfā* on the basis of his inclusion of our verse as a proof-text in his commentary on the cognate form *ʿēfā* in Amos 4:13:⁸

עשה שחר עיפה. הופך נוגהן של רשעים לחשך אפילה כמו והנה צרה וחשכה מעוף צוקה (ישעיה ח, כב), וכן ארץ עפתה (איוב י, כב), תעופה כבקר תהיה, חשך כבקר יהי מאיר.

It is apparent, then, that Rashi defined *tā'ūfā* as darkness.⁹

(2) The interpolation of *ʿaf'appē šaḥar*, "glimmerings of dawn," into Rashi's commentary here derives from a misunderstanding of a criticism levelled by Rashbam

4 No. 16250: 13th century.

5 The vowel appears in the ms. itself.

6 No. 167673: dated 1328.

7 An exception to this rule is ms. Lutzki (JTSA) 778 (24010: 13th century) which has a shorter and, as we hope to demonstrate, more accurate reading of: תעופה תחשיך כבקר תהיה. Cf. further on this ms. in n. 11, *infra*.

8 According to the critical edition prepared by Isaac Maarsen, *Parshandatha* (Jerusalem, 1972), 39. It should be noted that Maarsen began to deal with Rashi's commentaries to Proverbs and Job shortly before he perished in the Holocaust, as witnessed by his article: "Raschi's Kommentar zu Sprüche und Job," *MGWJ* 83 (1939), 442–56.

9 This definition appears to have been drawn from the *Maḥberet* (Lexicon) of Menaḥem ben Saruq (ed. Filipowski, 1854), 135: ענין: עשה שחר עיפה, והנה צרה וחשכה מעוף וצוקה, מאפל המה.

See further the citation attributed to Rashi in the *ʿArugat habosen*, ed. E. E. Urbach (Jerusalem, 1939), I:103.

against a part of Rashi's definition. Rashbam's commentary on our verse reads as follows:¹⁰

תעופה לשון חשך כמו עשה שחר ועיפה ג' ארץ עיפתה ג'. תעופה כשאתה סבור שתהיה חשך ומאופל אז תהיה כבקר וכשחר יבקע אורך . . . ולשון הקונטרס לא יתכן לומר תעופה הוא שם דבר אופל שאם כדבריו היה לינקד תי"ו של תעופה בחטף כי כמו יאמר מן שב תשובה קם תקומה רם תרומה בא תבואה כן היה לו לומר עף תעופה בשתי אותיות שורש . . .

It appears, then, that whereas Rashbam was only challenging Rashi's designation of *tā'ūfā* as a noun, *šēm dāwār*¹¹—while he thought that its vocalization pointed to a verb—his challenge was erroneously perceived as a contradiction to the entire definition.

(3) The identification of *ta'ūfā* with "the glimmerings of dawn" appears first in the *Kitāb al-'Uṣul* (*Sēfer hašorāšīm*) of Ibn Jannaḥ¹² and subsequently appears as a second opinion in the commentary of Moshe Kimḥi (ad loc.).¹³

C. The resolution

Having been led astray either by the text of Rashbam, or (and perhaps more likely) by the commentary of Yosef Qara³,¹⁴ the copyists—who left unmistakable signs of their presence elsewhere in this verse¹⁵ as well as throughout the book at large¹⁶—sought, and found in Ibn Jannaḥ or Kimḥi, another definition which they appended to the original grammatical observation of Rashbam.

10 Ms. Lutzki 778 (cf. n. 7, supra). On the attribution to Rashbam cf. Moshe Ahrend, "The Commentary of Rashbam on Job?" *Alai-Sefer* 5 (1978) [Hebrew]. I have cited it here at some length in order to demonstrate the wide variety of grammatical forms brought in evidence (cf. n. 2 supra).

11 While we have no manuscript evidence explicitly designating *tā'ūfā* here as a noun, we may infer the same from the aforementioned commentary on Amos 4:13 in which *tā'ūfā* is rendered by the nominal form *heškekāh*, "your darkness." From the commentary of Yosef Qara³ (ad loc.) we see that this was the opinion of Menahem bar Hebo on whose "Pitronim" Rashi regularly relied. According to Qara³ (ed. Zachariah Frankel, *MGWJ* 1856–58):

תעופה כבקר תהיה. חשיכה שבאה לך תתהפך לבקר. תעופה שם דבר, ופת' לשון חשיכה כמו עשה שחר ועיפה. כך שמעתי מ' מנחם ביר' חלבו וצ"ל. אבל ראיתי בפתרוני ר' שמואל ביר' מאיר שלא הודה בדבר . . .

On the designation of Rashbam's commentary by the title "Pitronim," cf. M. Sokolow, "Rashbam's Pentateuch Commentary—New Ms. Material," *Alai-Sefer* 11 (1984), 79, 1.27 [Hebrew].

It is worth nothing here that Ms. Lutzki (cited in n. 7 supra) preserves a reading which renders *tā'ūfā* by the verbal form *taḥšīkh* which conforms both to Rashi's definition and to Rashbam's grammatical part of speech!

12 Ed. W. Bacher (Berlin, 1896), 360, s.v. עור. Regarding the definition of the root *wp* according to both Ibn Jannaḥ and Sa'adiyah, cf. H. L. Ginsberg, *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958), 64 §r.

13 J. Schwartz, *Tiqwat 'enōš* (Berlin, 1862), 87: תעופה פ' תחשך מן עיפתה. וי"א תורה. David Kimḥi, in his *Sēfer hašorāšīm* (ed. Biesenthal-Lebrecht, 255), cites both his father's opinion as well as that of Judah Hayyuj, concluding: וננין כלם החשך והאפלה.

14 Cf. n. 11, supra, especially the last sentence: . . . אבל ראיתי בפתרוני ר' שמואל ביר' מאיר שלא הודה.

15 The commentary at the beginning of the verse, for instance, contains the telltale symbol: סא"א, standing for: שפרים אחרים איננו.

16 See Yitzchak Avineri, *Heikhal Rashi* (Jerusalem, 1980), 90–101: "On the Corruptions of Copyists and Printers" [Heb.], on such corruptions in Rashi in general, and see the literature referred to in n. 1, supra, regarding the text of Rashi on Job in particular.