

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XXII: Vayakhel (Ex. 35:1–38:20)

Essay 6. Why Rashi twice mentions Hur's lineage

פְּסוּק "רְאוּ קְרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצִלְאֵל בְּנֵי-חֹרִי בְּנֵי-חֹרִי וְכוּ', פֶּרַשׁ רַשִׁי חוֹר בְּנֵה שֶׁל מְרִיָּם הִנֵּה עכ"ל. קוֹשֶׁה מָה רָאָה רַשִׁי לְפָרֵשׁ כָּאֵן דְּחוֹר בְּנֵה שֶׁל מְרִיָּם הִנֵּה וְלֹא פִירְשׁוּ לְעֵיל בְּפֶרֶשׁתָּ כִּי תִשָּׂא בְּפֶסוּק "רָאָה קְרָאתִי בְּשֵׁם" וְכוּ', וְשֵׁם הִנֵּה מְקוֹמוֹ יוֹתֵר, וְשֶׁהוּא מוֹקֵדִם.

Rashi twice mentions Hur's lineage, in Ex. 24:14 and in Ex. 35:30. We first investigate the second mention.

There is a verse, Ex. 35:30: “And Moses said to the Israelites: **See, the L-rd has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur**, of the tribe of Judah.” **Rashi explained, “Hur was the son of Miriam.”**¹ A difficulty is what did Rashi see to make him explain here that Hur was the son of Miriam. He didn't explain it above in parashat Ki Tisa on the verse, Ex. 31:2, “The L-rd spoke to Moses: **See, I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur**, of the tribe of Judah,” which would have been a better place, being earlier in the Torah.

וְגַם לומר דְּבִשְׁלֵמָא לְעֵיל הִיִּתִי יָכוֹל לומר שֶׁהִרְאָה לוֹ הַקָּב"ה לְמִשָּׁה דוֹר דוֹר וְנִתְכַמְּיוּ, וְהִרְאָה לוֹ חוֹר וְהִרְאָה לוֹ מִיתָתוֹ לְכַבוֹד שְׁמַיָּם, וְהִרְאָה לוֹ בְּצִלְאֵל בֶּן בְּנֵי זוֹכֵה לְהִיּוֹת רֵאשׁוֹן בְּמִלְאֲכַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן. וּמִשּׁוֹם הֵכִי שִׁיִּיד לומר לְשׁוֹן רָאָה וְשִׁיִּיד נְמִי לְהַזְכִּיר שֵׁם חוֹר, אָבֵל גְּבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שִׁיִּיד לומר "רְאוּ", שֶׁהֵם לֹא הָיוּ רוֹאִים הַסֵּפֶר שֶׁל אָדָם הָרֵאשׁוֹן שְׁפָתוֹבִיִּים בּוֹ פֶּל הַדּוֹרוֹת וְנִתְכַמְּיָהֶם, וְלָמָּה לוֹ לומר כָּאֵן "רְאוּ". וְאִי מִשּׁוֹם שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹדְעִים שֶׁהָרְגוּ חוֹר וּמִשּׁוֹם הֵכִי הִנֵּה רוֹצֵה שִׁיִּיכְבְּדוּ בֶּן בְּנֵי, וְהִלָּא אֲדַרְבָּא מִטַּעַם זֶה מִמֶּשׁ אֲפִשְׁרַר שִׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִתְפַּצּוּ בּוֹ, חֲדָא דְשִׁמְא יֵאמְרוּ אִם הִנֵּה צְדִיק וְחֲסִיד הִנֵּה לוֹ לְהַקְב"ה לְהַצִּילוֹ מִיַּדְּנֵי שְׁלֵא נְמוֹת.

First, let's consider the command “See!” that is present in both of these two verses. **It can be said that granted, above in Ex. 31:2, regarding G-d's command, “See,” I would be able to say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed Moses every generation and its sages, and showed him Hur and showed him [Hur's] death for the honor of Heaven.**² Also, He showed him Bezalel, the son of [Hur's] son, who deserved to be first in the work of building the Tabernacle.³ Because of this, it's appropriate in Ex. 31:2 to speak in the language of “seeing,” and it was also appropriate to mention Hur there.

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¹ Rashi on Ex. 35:30, based on Sotah 11b.

² Hur was killed trying to prevent the construction of the Golden Calf, per Sanhedrin 7a, Targum Yonatan, and Rashi on Ex. 32:5.

³ Shemot Rabbah 40:2.

But regarding Israel, in Ex. 35:30, it apparently was not appropriate to say “See,” for while G-d showed Moses the generations, [the Israelites] weren’t seeing the book of Adam in which is written all of the generations and their sages, so why did [Moses] say “See” here?

So why did Moses say, “See, the L-rd has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur”? **Perhaps it’s because [the people] knew that they had killed Hur, and for that reason, [Moses] wanted them to honor [Hur’s] grandson, Bezalel.**⁴

But to the contrary, for this reason it is quite possible that Israel would not desire him, lest people say, “If [Hur] had been righteous and pious, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would have saved him from their hands, so that he wouldn’t have died.” People don’t want to believe that they or their ancestors did something evil, so they prefer to blame the victim. Thus, instead of imparting the concept that Bezalel was worthy because of his worthy grandfather, mentioning Hur might backfire.

ועוד דבפרק ט' דברכות אמרינו אין מעמידין פרנס על הציבור, אלא אם כן נמלכין בציבור, והראיה מבצלאל שאמר לו הקב"ה למשה שישאל לישאל הגון עליכם בצלאל. ופירש מהרש"א דבפרק קמא דסנהדרין אמרינו "ואצנה את-שפטכם" שלא יגיס דעתו עליהם ולא יטיל אימה יתירה עליהם, ועל זה השיבו למשה אם לפני הקב"ה ולפניך הגון, לפנינו לא כל שכן, פלומר אם הגון לפני הקב"ה שלא ישתרר עלינו וכו' עכ"ל. והשתא אם טעם זכירת חור כן הנה להזכיר להם שהרגו אותו, אם כן הנה אפשר שהם לא יתפצו בו מחשש שמא יתנה לו שנאה בלבם עליהם בשביל שהרגו אבי אביו וינקום מהם, ויותר טוב הנה שלא להזכיר חור כלל.

Also, in the ninth chapter of tractate Berachot (55a), it is said “Rabbi Yitzchak said: One may only appoint a leader over a community if he consults with the community [and they agree to the appointment],” and the proof of this rule is from Bezalel, for the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses that he should inquire of Israel if Bezalel was suitable for them.

The Maharsha explains that in the first chapter of tractate Sanhedrin, it is said about the verse, “I charged your magistrates at that time as follows, ‘Hear out your fellow Israelites, and decide justly between one party and the other—be it a fellow Israelite or a stranger,’”⁵ that they shouldn’t become haughty over them and they shouldn’t impose too much fear upon them.⁶ About this, they answered Moses, “If before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and before you he is suitable, before us he is appropriate even more so,”⁷ as if to say, if he is suitable before the Holy One, Blessed be He, that he won’t lord over us, all the more so he is suitable for us.

Now, if the reason for mentioning Hur here was to remind them that they killed him, if so, it’s possible that they wouldn’t want [Bezalel], out of fear that perhaps he would have hatred in his heart for them because they killed his grandfather, and he would take revenge upon them, and it would have been better not to have mentioned Hur at all.

⁴ Shemot Rabbah 48:3.

⁵ Deut. 1:16.

⁶ Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Edels (“the Maharsha”) (1555–1631), *Chidushei Agadot* for Sanhedrin 7b-8a. See also the Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Sanhedrin, chapter 25, halacha 1.

⁷ Berachot 55a.

או אף מטעם אחר, שְׁכַשְׁמֵם שְׁמַצְנָה לוֹמַר דְּבַר הַנְּשַׁמֵּעַ כִּי מַצְנָה שְׁלֵא לוֹמַר דְּבַר שְׁלֵא נִשְׁמַע, וְכַשְׂרָאָה חוֹר שְׁאִינָם רוֹצִים לְשִׁמוֹעַ אֶל דְּבָרָיו, לֹא הָיָה לוֹ לְהִתְאַמֵּץ בְּתוֹכָהּ, כְּדֵי שְׁלֵא יִבֹּאוּ לַחֲטֹא יוֹתֵר חֲמוֹר שְׁיִהְיוּ כְּמוֹ מִזִּידִים, וְנִמְצָא שֶׁהוּא גָרַם שְׁיִבְאוּ לִיְדֵי שְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים וְיִהְיֶה לָהֶם לֵב רַע עָלָיו וְעַל בֵּיתוֹ, וְלֹא יִרְצוּ לָתֵת לוֹ שְׂרָרָה וּכְבוֹד, וְלֹא הָיָה לוֹ לְמַשָּׂה לְהַזְכִּיר לָהֶם חוֹר שֶׁהוּא לְמַזְכֵּר עוֹן שֶׁל הַרִיגַת חוֹר.

Or even for another reason, that just as it is a mitzvah to say something that will be heeded, so too it is a mitzvah not to say something that will not be heeded.⁸ When Hur saw that they did not want to listen to his words against the Golden Calf, he should not have endeavored to rebuke them, in order that they shouldn't come to a more serious sin that would be considered intentional. I.e., an intentional sinner is judged more harshly than an unintentional sinner, so it's proper to rebuke people for a sin if one thinks they will stop their behavior, but if it's clear that they won't stop their behavior, it's better not to rebuke them.

It's found that [Hur] caused them to come to spilling of blood, i.e., maybe they would blame Hur for his own death at their hands. Perhaps they had an evil heart against him and his house. If so, they would not want to give [Bezalel] governance and honor, and so Moses should not have mentioned Hur to them, for this was a reminder of the sin of killing Hur.

לְכֹן פֶּרֶשׁ רַשִׁי "י בְּנֵה שֶׁל מְרִים הָיָה, כְּדֵאִתָּא בְּמִדְרַשׁ רַבָּה פְּרָשָׁה זוֹ וּבְפֶרֶשׁת כִּי תִשָּׂא שְׁבִיכוֹת מְרִים זָכָה בְּצִלְאֵל לְחַכְמָה כְּדַכְתִּיב "וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בְּתִים", כִּהְיוֹנָה וּמַלְכוּת מִיּוֹכְבֵד וְהַחֲכָמָה מִמְרִים. וְהַזְכִּיר לָהֶם חוֹר לְהַזְכִּיר שְׁמִרְיָם הַעֲמִידָה לָהֶם הַבָּאָר וְעִשְׂתָּה לָהֶם כַּמָּה טוֹבָה בְּמִצְרַיִם כְּגוֹדֵעַ וּמִשׁוּם הַכִּי אָמַר לָהֶם "רְאוּ", כְּלוּמַר רְאוּ אֵת מְרִים שְׁאֵתָם חֲיִיבִים בְּכַבּוּדָה וּבְכַבּוּד בְּנֵיהָ וּבְנֵיהָ שְׁיִקְבְּלוּ אוֹתוֹ.

Therefore, Rashi explained “He was the son of Miriam,” as it is said in Midrash Rabbah for this parasha (48:4), and in the parasha of Ki Tisa (40:1), that in the merit of Miriam, Bezalel merited wisdom. This is as it is written on the verse, “Because the midwives feared G-d, He made households for them”⁹: The priesthood and Levites were from Jochebed, and the wisdom was from Miriam.¹⁰

[Moses] reminded them of Hur to remind them that Miriam had established the well for them in the Wilderness,¹¹ and had performed a number of kindnesses for them in Egypt, as is known.¹² Because of this, he said to them, “See,” as if to say, “Behold Miriam, that you are obligated in respecting her and in respecting her sons, and certainly you should accept [Bezalel].” In other words, Rashi believes that when Moses reminded the people that Bezalel was the grandson of Hur, he expected them to remember that Hur was the son of Miriam. If the

⁸ Yevamot 65b.

⁹ Ex. 1:21.

¹⁰ This is based on Rashi on Ex. 1:21, except that Rashi states that Miriam was the source of kingship, not wisdom: “Houses [i.e., dynasties] of the priesthood and the Levites and of royalty which are all termed ‘houses,’ as it is said, ‘[when Solomon finished] building the house of the Lord and the house of the king. . .’ (1 Kings 9:1). The priesthood and Levites were from Jochebed [Shifrah]; and the kingship was from Miriam [Puah], as is stated in tractate Sotah.” In Sotah 11b, there is a dispute between Rav and Shmuel over the identity of the Hebrew midwives Shifrah and Puah. One said that they were mother and daughter, Jochebed and Miriam, while the other said that they were mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, Jochebed and Elisheba.

¹¹ Taanit 9a.

¹² Ex. Rabbah 1:15.

people still harbored ill will against Hur, they should nevertheless honor Bezalel as a great-grandson of Miriam.

ואתי שפיר נמי שלעיל בפירשת בשלח על פסוק "וימשה אהרן וחור" לא פרש רש"י כלום, ואחר כך בפירשת משפטים על פסוק "ויהנה אהרן וחור עמכם" שם כתב שחור בנה של מרים הנה. אלא לפי שבפירשת משפטים מדבר על חקמתו של חור, שהנה ראוי לישב בדין עם אהרן, משום הכי שייד לומר שם בנה של מרים הנה, שזכה לחכמה בזכותה של מרים.

We now investigate Rashi's first mention of Hur's lineage, in Ex. 24:14.

It's also fine that above in parashat Beshalach, on the verse, "Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill,"¹³ Rashi didn't offer any interpretation.

But afterward, in parashat Mishpatim, on the verse, "To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us until we return to you; you have Aaron and Hur with you; let anyone who has a legal matter approach them,"¹⁴ there he writes that Hur was the son of Miriam.¹⁵ This is because in parashat Mishpatim, he was speaking about the wisdom of Hur, who was worthy to sit in judgment with Aaron. Because of this, it was fitting to say there that he was the son of Miriam, for he merited wisdom in the merit of Miriam.

והדורשי רשומות נתנו טעם אחר, שמשה מנה את הזקנים לדון את העם, כדכתיב "ואלה הזקנים אמר שבו-לנו בנה עד אשר-נשוב אליכם", ואלו יכולים לדון בסתם לכל ישראל, ואחר כך העמיד אף אהרן וחור לדון אף הם את העם, ולפי שהיו קרובים ופסולים לדון ביחד, משום הכי סיים הפתוב "מי-בעל דברים יגש אליהם", דהיינו מי שיירצה בהם אף על פי שהם קרובים, יגש אליהם ויקבלם עליו ואז יכולים לדון, ולפיכך הוצרך רש"י לפרש כאן שחור בנה של מרים הנה, להודיענו שהיו קרובים, שלא היו יכולים לדון ביחד אם לא שבעל דברים יגש אליהם דהיינו שיקבלם עליו.

The expounders of metaphors gave another reason, that Moses appointed the elders to judge the people, as is written: "To the elders he had said, 'Wait here for us until we return to you; you have Aaron and Hur with you; let anyone who has a legal matter approach them.'" These elders were generally able to judge all Israel. Afterwards, [Moses] set up even Aaron and Hur to judge the people, but because they were relatives and typically invalid to judge together, because of this, Scripture concludes, "let anyone who has a legal matter approach them." That is, one who wants them as judges even though they are relatives of each other, should approach them and accept them upon himself, and then they will be able to judge. Therefore, Rashi needed to explain here that Hur was a son of Miriam, to inform us that they were relatives, that they wouldn't be able to judge together if the litigant wouldn't approach them. That is, they could only judge together if [the litigant] would accept them as judges for himself.

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¹³ Ex. 17:10.

¹⁴ Ex. 24:14.

¹⁵ Rashi writes on Ex. 24:14: "[Hur] was the son of Miriam and his father was Caleb the son of Jephunneh, as it is said, 'Caleb took unto him Ephrath, who bare him Hur' [I Chron. 2:9]; and Ephrath is identical with Miriam, as it is stated in Sotah [11b]."