

## Theses

1. After the monarchy David united split into two, the name Joseph became synonymous with the northern kingdom of Israel. Consequently, the name Joseph, the expressions “house of Joseph”, and “sons of Joseph” refer to a “geopolitical reality.”
2. The exegesis of the sages of Genesis Rabbah (5th century) demonstrates that “antisemitism” existed in their age. The writers of this commentary reveal the Egyptians’ prejudice toward the Jews. The Egyptians clearly dislike the idea of a Jewish ruler over Egypt, even one under the pharaoh.
3. Joseph appears in the rabbinic literature as righteous man who becomes the “prototype” for religious-ethical behavior. Some of the exegetical motifs lucidly show his righteousness. Similarly to the great personalities of the Hebrew Bible, Joseph was born circumcised. The Egyptian “girls climbed the wall” because of his beauty. Even in his death, he was an important part of the history of Israel because the greatest person in Israel, Moses himself, attended to his bones.
4. The exegetical motifs of rabbinic literature which have their root in the Hebrew Bible, continuously transform after their appearance. This transformation can be observed in the comparison of the earlier rabbinical works, and the commentary of Rashi, a Jewish sage from the Middle Ages.
5. In his Torah commentary, Rashi (1040-1105) emphasizes the basic meaning of the text called “peshat.” When exegeting the Joseph story, he utilizes the explanations of Genesis Rabbah, Targums, and less often the Talmud, Mishna and other “derash”, (allegorical) meanings of the rabbinical literature. Most of the time, Rashi subordinates the “derash” to the “peshat” meaning of the text.