

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.

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(MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY): DT = Doctoral Thesis (www.Rashiyomi.com/Rashibook.htm,

MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashi (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: Gn48-14a, Gn48-22b, Gn49-11d, Gn49-11c, Gn49-05c, Gn49-06c,d,
Gn35-22b, Gn49-12a, Gn49-17a, Gn49-03a,c, Gn49-03f**

PESHAT, SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

OVERVIEW: We will continue with the *routine* Rashi comments begun recently week. Although the classic work on gathering Rashi's explanation of meaning is *Avineri's Rashi's Palace*, we are approaching meaning through the *methods* used to arrive at the meaning. It is hoped that familiarity with these basic methods will lead to greater appreciation of Rashi. The 9 methods covered in this series are the word meaning methods of *hypernymy, meronymy, synecdoche, metonymy, grammatical roots, parallelism, reading literacy (the emphasis in my doctoral thesis), spatial-locative, and grammar*. We do not expect this series to be just routine, there will be novelties almost every week. These methods of meaning typically do not contain at all, or contain minimally, other Rashi form methods such as *homily, simpleton methods, etc.*

PARALLELISM: *Parallelism, the alignment of almost identical verse halves, the differences in the verse halves shedding meaning on each other, is a very powerful method that gives rise to many comments.*

TEXT OF VERSE	Lose the first bornhood	Because you played with	Your father's bed
Gn49-03f 1 st half	Your volatile behavior caused you to <u>lose the extras of the first born</u>	Because you <u>played</u> with	Your father's <u>bed</u>
Gn49-03f 2 nd half	Then you <u>profaned (the first-bornhood)</u>	When you <u>played</u>	With the <u>spreads</u>

Based on the parallelism Rashi comments that *spreads* refers to *beds*. Rashi does not give the reason but clearly it is because beds reserved for intimacy have *spread* on them certain types of pleasing sheets.

Rashi on Gn49-11b, based on a parallel verse in Isaiah explains that *sorayka* refers to long branches of a vine.

The vines of Sivmah are uprooted	Her long branches	Are destroyed
Is16-08 1 st half	Her <u>soraykahs</u>	Are <u>destroyed</u>
Is16-08 2 nd half	Her <u>boughs</u>	Are <u>cut off</u> into the sea

GRAMMATICAL ROOT MEANING: In the following verse the parallelism explains *shefifon* as a *type of snake*. However, Rashi adds, *the root of shefifon, to glide, would explain using this word to denote snake*.

May Dan be a	A snake	On the road
Gn49-17a 1 st half	A <u>snake</u>	On the <u>road</u>
Gn49-17a 2 nd half	A <u>shefifon</u>	On the <u>highway</u>

On Gn49-03a,c Rashi explains *pachaz* as a sort of *tumultuous (behalah)* state. Rashi gives no further details. However, the root letters are *pay-cheth-zayin*. If we regard *cheth* as a weak root letter we are left with *pay-zayin* the root which refers to *glittering gold*. Using the spatial-form-locative technique we could explain the appearance of *glitter* as a rapid tumultuous back and forth motion. The actual verse says *pachaz like water*. Thinking of when water appearance resembles glitter we would translated *pachaz* as *fiz*. Rashi further explains based on the vowels in *pachaz*. that in this verse *pachaz* functions as an adjective rather than a verb. The entire verse would then read *Fizzling like water caused the loss of the extras of the first-born, since you played with your father's beds; that is when you profaned the first born, when you played with the bedspreads*. Thus, *fiz* is a metaphor referring to volatile behavior.

Note: The reference of *playing with the bedspreads* is to Gn35-22 *While Jacob dwelled in that land, Reuven went and slept with Bilhah his father's concubine*. Here, however, in Gn49-03 it says that Reuven *played with his father's beds (plural), played with the bedspreads*. Rashi (Gn35-22b) explains the cross reference: *Since the verse in Gn49 speaks about playing with beds, playing with spreads we assume he only mixed up his father's beds. The argument here is that when Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife died, Jacob moved in with her maid Bilhah. Thus, Bilhah was preferred over Leah a co-wife. Reuven, Leah's eldest son was insulted and transferred Rachel's bedspreads which were on Bilhah's bed to Leah's bed in the hope of getting his father to come back. Because Reuven did this the verse accounts as if he slept with her (He should not have so invaded her personal space)*.

In translating this verse Gn49-03 we note the Hebrew root *ayin-lamed-hey* is used which means *to go up* But the sister root *ayin-lamed-lamed* means to *plot or play*, We believe it justified to transfer the *ayin-lamed-lamed* meaning to the *ayin-lamed-hey* root because of the poetic context.

In summary, Rashi deals with the juxtaposition of Gn35-22 (beds and bedspreads) and Gn35-22 (sleeping with Bilhah) and resolves the two accounts by stating that what Reuven really did was switch the bedspreads of Bilhah and Leah and the text accounts this as if he slept with Bilhah.

Gn49-12a speaks about eyes that are chachlil from wine. Rashi translated *chachlil* as meaning *reddened* (since people who excessively drink have bloodshot eyes). Rashi does not further explain how he arrived

at this (*chachlil* does not occur in the Tanakh again except in Pr23-29 where the phrase of *chachlil eyes* is also used). However, Rashi following Chazal typically interpret four letter root words by breaking them up into two two-letter roots. For example, *mamzer, illegitimate*, means *blemished (mum) from a stranger (zar)*. So I feel justified transferring this Rashi method to here even though Rashi does not explicitly mention it. *chachlil* would then mean *swirling (lul) of the palate (chaych)* and would aptly refer to someone *drunk*(swirling) from excessive wine (palate tastes).

Recall that in my doctoral thesis I point out that we can't properly understand what Rashi says without looking at all similar Rashis since in some cases Rashi may only mention key ideas in some but not all Rashi comments. In this case we must look at the Rashis on four letter roots. Thus, I believe I am justified in claiming that this interpretation, *swirling from the palate*, is Rashi's interpretation even though he didn't say it explicitly here.

SYNECDOCHE: *Synecdoche is a figure of speech in all languages whereby something is designated by a good example of it. Perhaps the easiest synecdoche to understand is using honey to mean sweet. The table below contains several synecdoche in the blessings of Jacob; in fact synecdoche is common in poetry.*

Verse	Text	Eng. Translation	Meaning of Root	Technique	Translation of verse
Gn48-14a	<i>Sichel</i>	skillfully guided his hands	Skillfully	Synecdoche	Jacob <i>skillfully</i> guided his hands (placing his right on the younger) (1)
Gn48-22b	<i>Schem</i>	an extra troop	shoulder	Synecdoche	Jacob tells Joseph: I have given you an extra <i>troop</i> (tribe; people who are shoulder to shoulder) over your brothers (2)
Gn49-11d	<i>Sutho</i>	lingerie	seduce	Synecdoche	In Messianic times people will wash their <i>lingerie</i> in wine
Gn49-11c	<i>wash clothes in wine</i>	Wine will be plentiful	wash clothes in wine	Synecdoche	In Messianic times <i>wine will be very plentiful</i> [so <i>wash clothes in wine</i> is a synecdoche of plentiful wine]
Gn49-05c	<i>Mechayrotheyhem</i>	roots	Dig	Synecdoche	Shimon and Levi have their <i>roots</i> in violence
Gn49-06c,d	<i>Teychad</i>	seen, mentioned with	together	Synecdoche	Jacob says I don't want to be <i>mentioned or seen with them</i> [together with them]

NOTES:

(1) Rav Hirsch beautifully explains: *advice* (aytzah from aytz tree) is *fruitful thought*. *Sichel* from *shacol* (cluster) would then mean very fruitful or skillful

(2) Rashi notes the double meaning: Besides giving Joseph an extra tribe he also gave him literally *schem*