

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in NiTzaViM
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GOALS

The goal of the Weekly Rashi Digest is to use the weekly Torah portion to expose students at all levels to the ten major methods of Rashi's commentary. Continual weekly exposure to these ten major methods facilitate the acquisition, familiarity, and facility with the major exegetical methods.

Hi

This year I am focusing on the presence of Jewish Law in verses and Rashi.

Thanks for those asking questions. As more questions come in we will spend more time on the questions and shorten the number of Rashis covered (most have them have been covered in previous years). Today, after answering a question, I go over one of my great contributions to the biblical literature, the author-intended status of puns.

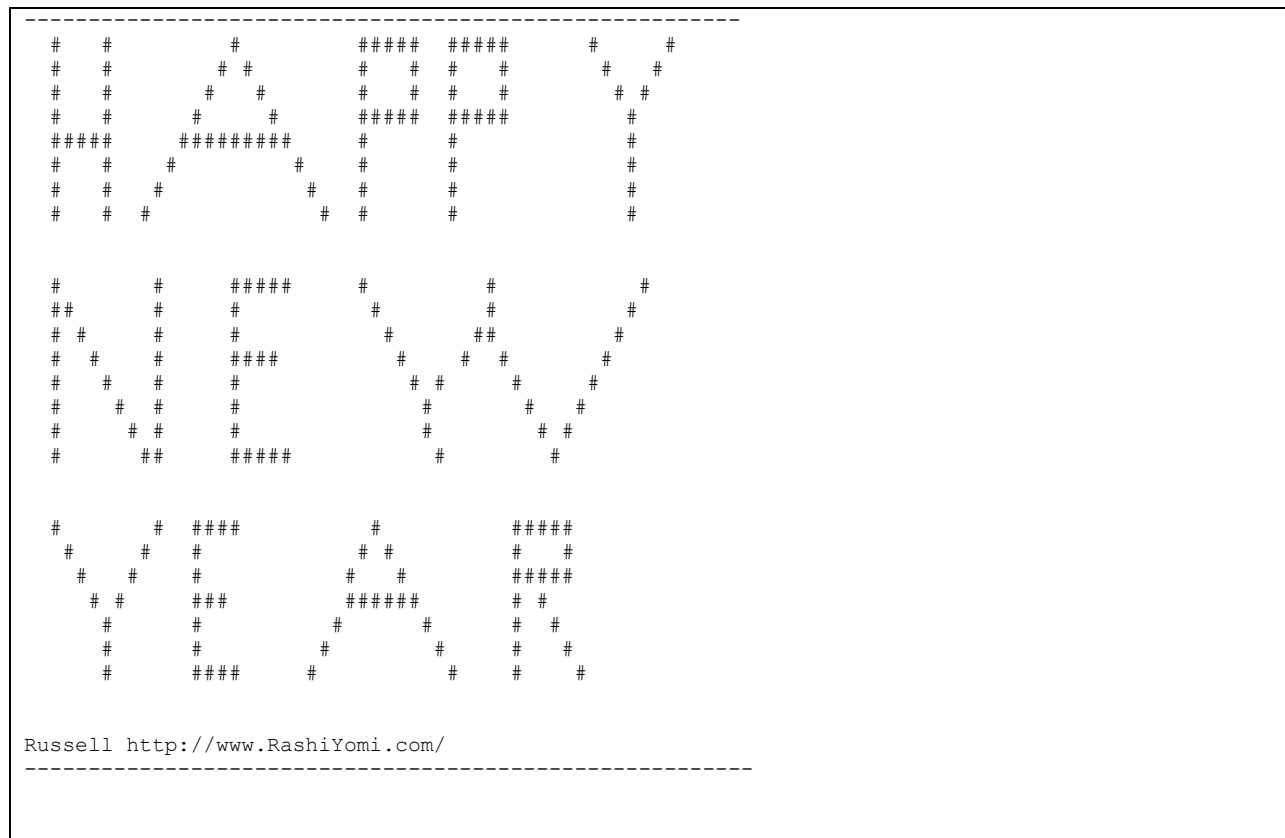
Enjoy

I will attempt to send out the Parshah over a week in advance.

Russell Jay Hendel, President, Rashiyomi

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Questions and Answers.

As a result of our survey I have resurrected the Q&A section of the Newsletter. Below please find an inquiry and the Rashi Newsletter response.

Questions:

Hi, Dr. Hendel,

Can you please give me the scoops on the meaning of LO TITAMER *Ayin/MEM/Resh Deuteronomy 21:14

Rashi seems to think it is a Persian word that has something to do with selling the services of an unloved, former lover that one acquired during war.

Is there ANY reason to think that the woman is being sold for sex (TASHMISH) in the Rashi, rather than for just household chores?

Best regards,
Hope you have a Shana Tovah and Mitukah

Rashiyomi Response:

There are 3 separate questions here. So, let us answer each one.

SUNDAY) What is the meaning of **Ayin-Mem-Resh**. To give background the Bible is speaking about a woman captive captured during war. If you decide not to marry her you must let her go free; you don't have a right to **Ayin-Mem-Resh** her. What is the meaning of **Ayin-Mem-Resh**? What is it you can't do?

The biblical root **Ayin-Mem-Resh** means *sheaf*. It refers to a *sheaf* of say wheat gathered in a field. The verbal form means to create a *sheaf*.

A universal principle of creating meaning in all languages is *metonymy* and *synecdoche*. This principle says that you can name an item or activity by a really really good example of it. Some illustrations of the metonymy-synecdoche principle are the following: *honey* can refer to anything sweet, not just to honey; *day* can refer to the entire 24-hour cycle, not just to the 12-hour part when it is lit; *mouths* can refer to people (e.g. I have so many *mouths* to feed at home).

Using the *metonymy-synecdoche* principle, *sheafing* is a good example of the type of work that laborers do. For example, the

gathering of all wheat strands into one sheaf is a good example of *menial labor*; the carrying of the created sheaf is a good example of *service*. Thus, *sheafing* covers the spectrum from menial to sheafing.

Thus, the biblical statement *do not sheaf the female captive* prohibits using her for any type of labor or service.

Monday) Rashi however, while agreeing that *sheafing* the female captive refers to labor and service, does not agree with my method of derivation. I have derived the meaning from universal literary principles. Rashi however, derives the meaning from its use in Persian. Why then did I deviate from Rashi?

The answer is subtle. Rashi does not use a textbook style (like the Rambam). Rashi will present different principles in separate places. For example, Rashi on **Lv02:11** explicitly says *all sweet fruit are called honey* using the *Metonymy-Synecdoche* principle. Contrastively, on **Ex12-09** Rashi uses Arabic words to derive meaning (Rashi points out that *na* in Arabic refers to something not fully cooked).

Thus, Rashi believed in both near eastern translation as well as literary principles. He selected different methods in separate places. The true student of Rashi should always try and confirm translations using as many methods as possible.

Tuesday) Next, we get to the following questions

Rashi seems to think it is a Persian word that has something to do with selling the services of an unloved, former lover that one acquired

during war.

Why did the inquirer ask this? That is what in Rashi's language prompted the inquirer to think that Rashi was saying this?

Rashi actually says

In the Persian language we use the phrase Ayin-Mem-Resh to refer to 1) work (*avduth*) and 2) service (*shimush*).

As shown, Rashi identifies two items one uses slaves for. Thus, the inquirer thought that one of the items is work while the other must be distinct, something other than work.

Actually, the root, **Shin-Mem-Shin**, is an Aramaic root meaning *service*. Now Hebrew and Aramaic, like all languages, have specific phrases and terms used to refer to intimacy. Throughout the Talmud the phrase *servicing a bed* is used to refer to intimacy. Besides using figures of speech, this phrase uses *irony* since the bed isn't being serviced but rather the bed is being used to service the people occupying it.

Thus, the inquirer thought that Rashi was identifying two purposes of slaves: *work*, *service of the bed*. The inquirer thought this both because of the idiom as well as because of the fact that Rashi used two words indicating two purposes.

Actually, the two purposes of slaves are 1) menial work and 2) service. We have already given examples of this above: The task of gathering wheat into a sheaf is *menial work*; the task of say transporting the bundled sheaf would be *service*, a type of work that is not that menial. Slaves can be used for both.

In fact, to further support our contention, that slaves are used for both, the Rambam Slaves Chapter 1:8-9, points out that *menial work, that is, work without a clear outcome or work for the sake of work* is prohibited for slaves. It is prohibited to tell a slave 1) *work till I come back*; however, 2a) *work for 8 hours* or 2b) *work till this amount of area is taken care of* is permissible. In #2) a specific task with a well-defined outcome is assigned and it is permissible; in #1) the work is not defined by task but simply as work for the sake of work (*till I come back*; thus, no specific outcome is involved).

Furthermore, to indicate intimacy the noun form *tashmish* is used; not *shimush*. Thus, Rashi is simply identifying two purposes of slaves *both* of which involve work.

Wednesday) We have left to deal with the 3rd question:

Is there ANY reason to think that the woman is being sold for sex (TASHMISH) in the Rashi, rather than for just household chores?

There are popular accounts that in Jewish law, certain types of slaves can be used to produce other slaves. However, this is not the main reason slaves are sold. The Rambam, Laws of Sales, 15:13-14 clearly states that

Slaves are sold for work not for reproduction

The Rambam gives examples:

If you bought a slave and it is found afterwards that the slave's body is covered with repulsive items, then the sale is a mistaken sale; the purchaser

can reacquire his money since repulsiveness prevents using the slave for work. But if it was discovered afterwards that the slave has halitosis or non-visible bodily blemishes, then the sale is not mistaken, for the halitosis and blemishes do not interfere with his work [they at most interfere with using him for reproduction] and slaves are not sold for reproduction

Thursday) One more comment on the inquirer's questions: The inquirer asked

Rashi seems to think it is a Persian word that has something to do with selling the services of an unloved, former lover that one acquired during war.

Actually, the prohibition, as Rashi mentions, is *using the person* (not necessarily selling her services). I do not have a tradition on what the law refers to but, in another context, Rambam Theft 9:2 says that any type of usage is prohibited

Even leaning on the person while the person is asleep

However, Rambam, Kings 8:8 simply says it is prohibited to use her without further defining the usage. It is therefore a suggested novelty of mine to transfer the definition of usage from Theft 9:2 to the female captive; it is a novelty since I have not heard definitively that the two cases (kidnapping, and female captive) are the same or different.

Friday) In conclusion, Rashi explains that the Torah prohibits

work and *service* on the female captured in war if the capturer decides he doesn't want to marry her. Rashi explicitly learns this from the use of the root **Ayin-Mem-Resh** which means work and service in Persian. I have argued that it is consistent with Rashi's methodology to also use the metonymy-synecdoche method to derive this.

Please send inquiries on anything bothering you in Rashi. Questions should be sent to RashiYomi@GMail.Com.

Please feel free to ask questions on particular Rashis. Send inquiries to Rashiyomi@GMail.com. All questions are posted anonymously unless otherwise indicated.

Grammar - Puns *Daily Rashi* Dt30-03, Sep 8, 2018

Background: The biblical text discusses the return of exiles, the return of the Jews from where they are exiled, when they repent. Let us examine the language.

Biblical Text:

Dt30-03 *And God will return your returnees and have pity on you*

Rashi Text: The text is stating two things

- God will himself return from exile (Underlined words)
- God will return your returnees, the Jews from exile.

Rashi further explains

- For God to return the Jews requires the *causative tense*; God is causing others to return. But the Hebrew form of *return* in the causative tense is *vehayshiv*.
- The verse does not use the *vehayshiv*. Rather it uses *veshav*, the active form of the verb. Just to be clear

1) *Vehayshiv*, Hebrew *Hifil*, *causative* construction, means to make others return

2) *VeShav*, Hebrew *Kal*, *active* construction, means for you yourself to return

Hence, concludes Rashi, besides returning the Jews, God himself returns! As it were God was exiled with us and emphasized with our suffering and exile.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The above Rashi is what typically turns people off: "Isn't that silly", they say, "the text is clearly stating that will return us. Someone found a queer grammatical construction and decided to rationalize it after the fact."

Not so. In my article, *Biblical Puns*, **Jewish Bible Quarterly**, 34(3), 2006, 190-198, accessible at <http://www.Rashiyomi.com/puns.pdf>, I explain the following (beautiful) points

- Puns exist in all cultures
- There is a debate among secular scholars where a) puns are purely in one's head, read into the text by the reader, but are not really in the text or b) puns are author-intended, following the grammatical rules of puns.
- A special type of pun is a metaplasms, which occurs when a word is deliberately misspelled so as to convey a second message in a sentence. Such a pun is author-intended since the spelling was deliberate
- Thus we have here (whether in secular or biblical literature) an example of where a sentence can actually have two message; message one is the message of the whole sentences, while message two which is author intended, is the message of the secondary pun sentence.

Thus, the simple meaning of the biblical text is *both* and *both* are Author-intended

- God will return us from exiles

- God Himself will return from exile with us.

Praised be Him who Chose Them and Their Learning

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I-REFERENCE: Dt26-05d We went down to Egypt with a few people explained by Gn46-27: with 70 people

II-MEANING / Lexicography / Dictionary: **EXAMPLE (Connectives)** KI means IF,PERHAPS,RATHER,BECAUSE,WHEN,THAT (Rashi on Gn18-15a Gn24-33a) **EXAMPLE (Nuances):** YDA means FAMILIAR, not KNOW (egg Dt34-10a) egg Gn04-01 Adam was FAMILIAR with his wife **EXAMPLE (Idioms)** ON THE FACE OF means DURING THE LIFETIME (Rashi on Nu03-04a Gn11-28a Ex20-03c Dt05-07a) **EXAMPLE (Synonyms)** Marchese means pot; Machinate means frying pan (Lv02-05a, 07a) **EXAMPLE (Homonyms)** SHAMAH can mean listen, hear, understand: (Gn42-23a) *They didn't appreciate that Joseph understood them* (Note: They knew he was listening) **EXAMPLE (Metonymy)** (Lv02-11a) *Don't offer ...any honey as sacrifices* RASHI: honey includes any sweet fruit juice

III-GRAMMAR: **EXAMPLE:** BA-ah means Candelabras means COMING(Gn46-26a) **EXAMPLE:** Whiptail conjugation has different rules if 1st root letter is Trade (Gn44-16a)

IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Don't **POSSESS** the gods of others Don't **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion** & **MAKING** of idols are prohibited

V-CONTRADICTION: (Nu04-03, Nu08-24a) Levites start Temple work at 25; Levites start temple work at 30. RASHI: They apprentice at 25 but start actual service at 30.

VI-STYLE: RABBI ISHMAEL RULES: EXAMPLE: (Simple verses should be generalized): (Rashi Pesachim 6) (Dt25-04a) *Don't MUZZLE an OX while THRESHING* RASHI: Don't STOP any WORKING ANIMAL from eating

VII-FORMATTING: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition): Ex12-09c) COOK COOK it in water (So COOKED-COOKED is understood the same way bold is understood by modern reader) RASHI: Preferred to COOK it in water; But COOK it at all costs(Even if you don't have water) **EXAMPLE: (BULLETS indicated by Repeating keywords)** (Ex03-11a) Who am I - **THAT** I should go to Pharaoh - **THAT** I should take the Jews out of Egypt RASHI: Repeated word **THAT** creates BULLET effect - Pharaoh was a difficult king (Bullet one) - Jews were not yet ready for freedom (Bullet two) **EXAMPLE (Climax assumed in any Biblical list):** (Dt19-11a) *If a man HATES, SPIES, CONFRONTS & KILLS.* RASHI: Bible identifies 4 stages to murder(indicated by capped words)

VIII-DATABASE: EXAMPLE: *God spoke to Moses to say over* introduces about 7 dozen biblical commandments; *God spoke to Aaron to say over* only introduces 2 commandments. RASHI: (Lv10-03b) Aaron was silent when his sons died because they served in the Temple drunk; hence he merited that the commandment prohibiting priests to work in the Temple drunk, was given to him

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IX-NON VERSE: EXAMPLE: (Use of Algebra)(Ex38-26b) *Temple donations of silver were 100 Kikar and 1775 Shekel from 630,550 half-shekels* RASHI: So one Kikar of silver = 3000 Shekel.

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X: SYMBOLISM: EXAMPLE: (Use of puns) Moses made a copper snake for people to look up to when bitten by snakes (so they should pray and recover) RASHI: (Nu21-09a) The Hebrew root for copper and snake are identical (Cf. The English *copperhead*) Moses made the metal snake copper colored to symbolize the snake