

RashiYomi
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Dt30-03a

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Our mission is to show all Rashi comments as Peshat, the simple straightforward meaning of the text following the same laws of interpretation governing ordinary everyday conversation.

The main RashiYomi categories of interpretation are :

- 1) **Grammar:** *Including verb conjugation, rules of style, paragraph development, and all relations of form and meaning*
- 2) **Parallelism:** *Including all nuances and inuendoes arising from same-verse parallelism, multi-verse parallelism, database inquiries, and contradictory verses*
- 3) **Symbolism:** *including parables, images, metaphors, similes, motifs, archetypes, signs, and tokens*
- 4) **Meaning:** *including all figures of speech*



Verse Text Dt30-03a

And God, your Lord,

- *Will return your exiles and have pity on you,*
- *He will return and gather you from all the nations that God, your Lord, dispersed you there*

Rashi Text:

It should have said God will return you [using the Hebrew causative: God will cause you to return] [Instead it uses the active, God will return].

Our Rabbis learn from here (as it were) that the Divine presence lives with the Jews in exile and therefore when the Jews are redeemed the text mentions that God Himself will return.

We can say more: Because of the difficulty in gathering the exiles it is as if God himself personally escorts each exiled Jew by the hand and takes him back(**Is27-12**)

Supplementary material

- Just to clarify the Hebrew grammar
 - (QAL) **Shin-Beth** means I return
 - (HIFIL) **Hey-shin-yud-beth** means I will return you
 - Since the verse indicates God will return someone else Rashi asks why the QAL form is used instead of the HIFIL
 - Here QAL and HIFIL are names of Hebrew verb conjugations
- A special treat today. We will derive this Rashi comment using 3 distinct Rashi methods: **Meaning** (Puns), **Grammar** (Prepositions), **Parallelism**.

RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We give three explanations. This is Explanation I.
- This Rashi is explained with the Rashi Meaning Method
- Remember the Meaning method allows all figures of speech
- In this Rashi we use the methods of puns.
- Most people (including learned Rabbanim) are surprised to learn that even secular scholars consider puns as *peshat*, as the simple meaning of the text
- Puns allow a sentence to have two simple meanings
- We show examples on the next slide
- (Important) You can't use puns when you feel like. You must see a textual indication that the Author intended you to hear this pun. Otherwise the pun is not simple meaning (and Rashi will not use it)

Examples of Intended Puns

EXAMPLE 1: The doctor tried to convince his patient that high blood pressure affects one's life and that he must change his eating habits. So he wrote on the prescription: *Remember: When you have high blood pressure your life is at steak*

ANALYSIS: The doctor's prescription message contains a pun: The doctor's message has two meanings: 1) Your life is at stake, 2) You must cut out salty meats like steak if you want to lower blood pressure.

INDICATION OF INTENT: Do you notice that the doctor deliberately mis-spelled *steak*. This is a spelling pun. The technical name is metaplasms. You don't have to know the technical name. You do have to know that mis-spelling is considered a way to indicate Author intent of a pun and consequent double meaning.

RECAP: The Rashiyomi definition of *Peshat* is anything that people in a conversation would recognize as intended. If you saw the doctor write this message would you agree that the doctor intended two messages for his patient? If so, it is *Peshat*, the simple meaning(s) of the text.

Examples of Intended Puns

EXAMPLE 2: The group of teenage kids just killed skunk. They decided to get rid of it and threw it in the small pond. They were caught, and admitted we **stank** the dead skunk.

ANALYSIS: The confession message contains a pun: The message has two meanings: 1) We sank the skunk into the pond 2) The skunk stank up the pond (Which is how they were caught)

INDICATION OF INTENT: Do you notice that the confessor deliberately mis-spelled and mispronounced **sank** as **stank**. This is a spelling pun. The technical name is metaplasma. You don't have to know the technical name. You do have to know that mis-spelling is considered a way to indicate Author intent of a pun and consequent double meaning

RECAP: The Rashiyomi definition of *Peshat* is anything that people in a conversation would recognize as intended. If you caught these teenagers and they admitted they **stank** the sunk would you agree that they were confessing to being the cause of stinking up the pond? If so, it is *Peshat*, the simple meaning of the text.

Application of Rashi Rule to Dt30-03a

The verse should have said *God will return you* (using the causative conjugation) since God is causing someone else to return.

Instead it says, *God returns* (using the active tense: God Himself returns)

This mis-spelling creates a spelling **pun**, also called a metaplasma. The pun creates a double meaning (both of which are intended) to the single verse

The verse is translated as simultaneously meaning:

- *God will cause you to return*
- *God (Himself) will return.*

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RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We give three explanations. This is Explanation II
- This Rashi is explained with the Grammar Method
- One focus of Grammar is on connective words: *in, with, if, by, after*
- Many connective words in Hebrew have multiple meanings
- Sometimes a word can even mean its opposite.
- In Hebrew connective words don't have fixed means but rather the meaning adapts to the verse.
- The next page contains illustrative examples

Examples: Connective Words, multiple meanings

Example 1: The Hebrew letter *vav*, when prefixed to a word can mean both

- **And** (Gn23-40) *
- **Or** (Ex21-17)

The usual meaning is *and*. We indicate typical meaning with an asterisk as shown. The verses in parenthesis present illustrative examples illustrating the meaning and are obtained from lists in RaDaQ *Shoroshim*.

Example 2: The Hebrew word *el* **Aleph-Lamed** usually means *to* but it can mean

- **To*** (Ex06-10, Gn12-01)
- **From** (Gn41-57, Ez15-29, ⬅ Some commenters provide alternate explanations of these verses)
- **On** (1S17-49, 2S02-09, Ex18-06, Is63-15)
- **With** (Gn49-29, Ju11-19)
- **In** (Ex25-21, Lv18-20, 1S10-22, Nu24-10, Ez44-30, Gn37-36)

Example 3: The Hebrew word *eth* [**Aleph-Tauv**] usually has no meaning: It is placed before a word to indicate it is the object of a verb. For example instead of saying *honor your father and mother* the Bible says *honor eth your father and mother*. Thus the *eth* indicates who is being honored. But *eth* can have multiple meanings: It can mean:

- **With** (Gn37-02, Ps78-08, Ex01-01 and possibly also Ez39-14, 1S17-34, 2K06-05)
- **No meaning** but indication of the object of the verb (as just discussed)*
- **From** (Gn49-25, Gn44-04, Lv25-16, Gn41-08, 1K15-23)
- **To** (Lv13-49, Jb26-04, 1K30-21, Ju19-18, Ju15-26)

Application of Rashi Rule to Dt30-03a

- The verse uses the connective word *eth*.
- We just saw that we can translate *eth* as meaning *with*.
- So the verse:
 - Does not say: *God will return eth you*
 - But does say: *God will return with you*

Discussion Points

- Notice the elegance of this grammatical approach.
- According to this approach the verse actually says *God will return with you*
- Hence the Rashi comment that God was in exile and returns with us is
 - No longer seen as fanciful and homiletic
 - No longer seen as an apologetic attempt by Rashi to read into the text ideas that would uplift the downtrodden people of his time who were living through the crusades
 - But rather Rashi is seen as simple, as stating the straightforward meaning of the text
- In a very real sense then, Rashi is simply giving the *Peshat*.

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RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We give three explanations. **This is Explanation III**
- This Rashi is explained with the **Rashi Parallelism Method**
- The Rashi parallelism method follows the ideas of Kugel who taught
 - That when two clauses are parallel
 - The second clause accepts the first clause, and, further,
 - Adds to it
- Just to clarify. Kugel rejects the following as incorrect
 - Both clauses are saying the same thing in different words
 - The second clause is totally different than the first clause.
- The next slides give examples

Examples of Parallelism

EXAMPLE 1: Ps 145:2 (from the daily prayers)

- *Every day* I will *bless* you
- I will *praise* you *forever*

ANALYSIS: The first clause simply says that the blessing of God will be *daily*. The second clause builds on this: This *daily* blessing of God will be *forever*

INDICATION OF INTENT: Do you notice how *every day* is mentioned in the first clause but not the second while *forever* is mentioned in the second clause but not the first. Such contrasts help to indicate intent.

COMMENTS: There probably is significance to the progression from *bless* to *praise*. I do not currently know what that significance is. Very often in a parallel verse you initially can only understand part of it.

Examples of Parallelism

EXAMPLE 2: Ps 145:4 (from the daily prayers)

- Every generation will **praise** **Your deeds**
- **Your mighty acts**: they will **tell stories** about

ANALYSIS: The first clause simply talks about **deeds** while the second clause builds on this and speaks about **mighty acts** (A special kind of deeds).

ANALYSIS: The first clause simply talks about **praise** while the second clause builds on this and goes further: Not only will they be praised but they will be **spoken about**, the **entire story** will be told.

Examples of Parallelism

EXAMPLE 3: Ex20-03 (from the ten commandments)

- Do not possess other gods in my presence
- Do not make for your personal gain sculptures and engraved images

ANALYSIS: The first clause prohibits acceptance of other gods (for example possession of idolatrous icons). The second clause goes further: Don't even manufacture images for personal gain (even though you aren't doing for yourself). The emphasis here is to stay away from idolatry both from belief as well as involvement.

ANALYSIS: The first clause simply speaks about other gods generally. The second clause builds on this by giving details: The second clause prohibits sculptures as well as images.

Application of Rashi Rule to Dt30-03a

Dt30-03a is written in parallel form

- *And God your Lord Will return your exiles and have pity on you,*
- *He will return and gather you from all the nations that God, your Lord, dispersed you there*

We apply the **Parallelism principle** in the sense of Kugel

- The second clause speaks about God **gathering the Jews** from dispersed lands and bringing them back (to Israel)
- The first clause must be something lighter: It is not the **whole nation** that will return but **God** who will return. He will return to reside in Israel (possibly referring to the restoration of prophecy). The second clause then builds on this: Once God has returned and re-established prophecy, you, the dispersed nation, can also return.

Discussion Points

- We have given three explanations. Is that because we can choose which one we like best?
- No: Rashi uses all three.
- First: Rashi could not use the grammatical fact that *eth* means *with*. Why? Because it usually does not mean with and therefore you can't just pick and choose that it means *with* here
- But since there is a pun – the active *He will return* versus the causative *He will return you* – therefore, the use of the translation of *eth* as *with* is supportive.
- So explanations I and II go together
- What about explanation III, the parallelism? Rashi's view is that this is a second inference from the verse. Here in fact is what Rashi says
- *And you can further say the following: The pain of the era of the gathering of the exiles is so great that God as it were personally holds each Jew by the hand and escorts him back to Israel. This [personal touch] is supported by a verse **Is27:12** You will be gleaned one one*

Discussion Points: Summary

- A. *God returns with you:* This is the first clause and emphasizes that the gathering of exiles is not just about our return but about God's return (say the restoration of prophecy)
- B. *God returns and gathers you from all the nations where God your Lord dispersed you:* This indicates a personal touch that God personally returns and personally gathers us wherever we are
 - The first point (A) is inferred from the *pun* and the fact that the connective word *eth* means *with*
 - The second point (B) is inferred from the Parallelism.
- One sees the meticulousness and detail by which Rashi explained this verse. Each and every aspect contributed to a dual inference based on solid rules of daily conversation.