

*RashiYomi*  
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*Dt32-44a*

*[RashiYomi@GMail.Com](mailto:RashiYomi@GMail.Com)*

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**Dr. Russell Jay Hendel; President**

*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 Dt31-01, Dt32-44a

- *Moses went: spoke these things* to all Israel
- *Moses came: spoke this song* in nations ears, with Hosea
- (1) (2) (3)

### Rashi Text:

- i) It was the rotation week [Moses replaced by Joshua]
- ii) Moses made Joshua his translator / expositor during his [Moses'] lifetime...
- iii) He is called Hosea [instead of Joshua] to emphasize that he didn't let the position go to this head.

### Supplementary material

- Pay attention to (1),(2),(3) in the purple box. These three differences between **Dt31-01** and **Dt32-44** will form the basis for explaining Rashi
- Here is the Sifray on which Rashi is based: *Here it says Moses came while above it says Moses went. You can't say he came because it says he went and you can't say he went because it says he came. But it was rotation week and power was being transferred to Joshua*

## RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- This Rashi is explained with the Rashi (Distant) Parallelism Method
- The Rashi parallelism method reviews two verses which are almost identical
- The minor differences between the two verses reveal author intent, nuances, and inuendoes
- Rashi applies this principle to a verse in the previous Parshah as shown on the last slide.
  - There it says Moses went
  - Here it says Moses came with Joshua

# Examples of Rashis Parallelism Method

**EXAMPLE 1:** Compare the prohibition of false oaths in **Lv19-12** and **Ex20-07**

- *Don't bear the name of God for nought*
- *Don't swear by My name falsely*
- (1) (2) (3)

**ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCE (3):** Swearing that a wooden table is golden is false; Swearing that a wooden table is wooden is swearing for nought. Both are prohibited.

**ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCE (2):** It is both prohibited to swear falsely using the phrase “I swear by God” as well as using the phrase “I swear by the Omnipresent” In other words it is prohibited whether you use the proper name of God (God in English) or some attribute that everyone understands refers to God such as “Omnipresent”

**ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCE (1):** The prohibition (and punishment) apply whether one used the word “swear” or some other word recognized as meaning oath (e.g. “So help me God, what I said is true”)



## Application of Rashi Rule to Dt31-01, Dt32-44

- We focus on difference 3 in the purple verse-text box shown a few slides ago. One verse says that Moses spoke to Israel while the other verse says Moses spoke to Israel with Joshua
- Rashi explains, consistent with God's order in Dt31 that Joshua is replacing Moses, that this time when Moses spoke, he used Joshua to elaborate on his words.
- Hence the Rashi comment, *It was the week of rotation!*

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- I have explained this Rashi comment (rotation week) based on the extra phrase that Moses came with Johsua
- Why? Why didn't I use the explanation of the Sifray which states You can't say he came because it says he went; and you can't say he went because it says he came. So you must say that this was the week of rotation. This corresponds to difference (1) in the verse text box shown a few slides ago(Moses came vs Moses went)
- Because this is a silly rhyme designed to increase retention and memory. It does support the explanation that it was rotation week but it is not the source of the explanation. Rather the source of the explanation is the very obvious and explicit addition, He came with Joshua.
- This main-explanation versus support distinction is useful in making Rashi deeper
- This is also consistent with my view that Rashi and Chazal played as Bais Yaakov teacher sometimes, making clever rhymes to help retention. This is important (both the humor and mnemonic) But they didn't seriously think it was the true underlying reason.

## RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We next explain a second comment in the Rashis on this verse
- This Rashi comment is explained with the Rashi Meaning – Idiom method
- The Rashi Meaning – Idiom method identifies Biblical Idioms
- What is an Idiom? It is a sequence of words whose meaning transcends the sum of meanings of its individual components
- All languages have Idioms. Examples are given on the next page
- Rashi applies the Idiom method to the phrase *Moses spoke in the ears of the nation these words*



# Examples of the Rashi Idiom Method

**EXAMPLE 1:** It's a piece of cake, is an English Idiom

- The phrase has nothing to do with eating or cake
- Rather it means that a task is easy (as easy as biting through cake)



**EXAMPLE 2:** It's raining cats and dogs, is an English idiom

- The phrase has nothing to do with cats and dogs
- Rather it means that it is raining hard.

**EXAMPLES 3,4:** Its up in the air or the jury is still out are English Idioms

- The phrases have nothing to do with Juries or air
- Rather the phrase mean that something is undecided

In each of these cases

- The idiom's meaning is not the sum of the meaning of its individual words
- On the contrary: The idiom's meaning has nothing to do with the individual words
- The idiom takes on its own meaning, distinct from the meanings of its individual words

# Application of Rashi Rule to Dt31-01, Dt32-44

- The verse does
  - Not say, Moses spoke these words to Israel, but
  - Rather says, Moses spoke in the ears of the nation these words
- To speak in the ears of the nation is a Biblical idiom
- It's meaning need not have anything to do with ears!!!
- We can ascertain the meaning of the idiom by investigating the dozen or so verses where the idiom occurs
- Here is a list if the interested reader wants to go deeper
  - **Gn23-16, Gn44-18, Dt05-01, Jo20-04, 2S03-19, Jr26-15, Jr28-07**
- In all these verses **speaking in the ears of** is an idiom meaning **explaining and elaborating**.
- We can summarize this by contrasting **speak** versus **explain/elaborate**
- **I believe this distinction captures the essence of the idiom.**
- Hence the Rashi comment: **Moses allowed (his student) Joshua to be the elaborator and explainer of Moses speech.**

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# DISCUSSION POINTS

- Rashi says that Moses brought Joshua to **translate**. I have explained this Rashi as to **elaborate**.
- Why? Because translation was a term used in Babylon where the natural language was Aramaic and the Jews needed a translator.
- In the Desert all Jews spoke Hebrew. So Joshua was brought to elaborate
- The translation **explain/elaborate** is consistent with the other supportive verses we brought using the phrase **speak in the ears**.



## RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We now explain why **Joshua** is called **Hosea** in this verse
- This Rashi comment 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 the Rashi Pun Method

**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 Dt31-01, Dt32-44

- Quite simply this verse calls Joshua by his old name Hosea
- This is a misspelling indicating nuance
- The technical name for a pun based on deliberate misspelling is metaplasms but you need not concern yourself with this technicality.
- Joshua went through the following names
  - His name was Hosea
  - Moses renamed him in Nu13-16 which states Moses named Hosea, Joshua
  - For the rest of the bible except in Dt32-44, Hosea is called Joshua
  - Why was his name changed, and why is he called by his old name here
- It is not hard to figure out: Joshua as a word means “Please save”
- Hence the Rashi on Nu13-16: Moses prayed, God: Please save Hosea from the viewpoint of the spies who had doubts whether God could save us
- Hence here when Moses names Hosea as his successor he deliberately avoids the pun Please save.
- Hosea by itself means Saved.
- So the pun is clear: Joshua is permanently saved and does not need special prayers.

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- Rashi actually says The calling of Joshua, Hosea, shows that despite the appointment Joshua remained modest and did not let the promotion go to his head.
- Rashi citing the Sifray gives other examples of people who attained leadership but remained modest
- Why didn't I cite this reading of Rashi ?
- Because I focused on the derivation rather than the personality trait
  - The pun itself simply means that Joshua is saved (Hosea, saved) and
  - No longer needs prayers to be saved (Joshua, Please save)
- This is the main idea and derivation
- The particular nuance of this basic idea, that Joshua did not let his appointment go to his head is one direction to take this idea in.
- So
  - In explaining the Rashi I focused on the derivation
  - The Rashi comment itself focused on the personality trait consistent with this derivation