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Gn04-01a
Gn10-25a,b
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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 Rashiomi 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 Gn04-01a

- *(Gn02-25)... They [Adam and Eve] were both flirting with each other without anything premature happening...(Gn03-01) But the snake was cunning...and he said: 'So what if God said don't eat from the tree'and they ate....God punished them....(Gn04-01) Adam **had already known** his wife and she gave birth to Kayin*

Rashi Text:

- i) The text naturally reads: (Gn02-25) *Adam and Eve were flirting without anything premature happening; (Gn04-01) Adam knew his wife, she became pregnant and gave birth to Kayin.*
- ii) The incident with the snake (Ch3) happened after Kayin's birth. But the text placed the snake story after Gn02-25 to explain *why* the snake sinned: He saw them flirting and wanted relations with them. Therefore he enticed them to sin hoping one would die whom he could then pick up.

Supplementary Material

- This Rashi Digest comes from an inquirer who asked me to explain the famous Rashi dictum that “*Stories in the Bible are not listed chronologically.*” We will spend the year reviewing all such Rashi comments in the hope of explaining them.
- The reader probably noted that I avoided the usual translation: Adam and Eve were naked but not embarrassed. My reasons for doing so will be discussed in the supplementary material
- Note how I embedded Rashi's comment that Kayin's birth had already happened by using the translation **had already known** his wife. This will be discussed below.

RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- This Rashi is explained with the Rashi Grammar Method
- Grammar refers to the correlation between form and meaning
- For example everyone who speaks English knows that
 - *apples* indicates a plurality of apples while
 - *apple* indicates one apple.
 - Here the form (terminal s) indicates a plural meaning
- Another English example is the difference (in English!) between the past perfect and the simple past.
- Here are the rules (Examples on the next slide):
 - The simple past connotes something in the past like dinner
 - The past perfect indicates events prior to that dinner (like if I ate an apple at lunch)
- In
 - English you indicate the past perfect with *had*
 - In Biblical Hebrew you indicate the past perfect with the past conjugation (e.g. *Yadah*)
 - You indicate the simple past with a future and a conversive vav (e.g. *Vayaydah*)

Examples of Grammar Method

EXAMPLE: Let us suppose we are discussing the dinner I had last night

- Simple past: If I say I ate this apple then it means I ate it at dinner
- Past perfect: If I say I had eaten this apple, it means eating of the apple was before the dinner.

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn01-01, Gn04-01, Gn10-25

- **Gn01-01** uses the **past perfect** (**barah**) rather than the **simple perfect** (**Vayivrah**). Hence it means *The world had been formless*. The English Translation of the Zohar uses this to prove that Genesis 1 does not start at the beginning of creation but in the middle: It mentions that God had attempted to create worlds but the worlds had been formless until he created this one
- **Gn04-01** uses the **past perfect** (**Yadah**) rather than the **simple perfect** (**Vayaydah**). It means Adam **had known** his wife. Hence the Rashi comment: **The birth of Kayin had already happened**. In fact it happened (quite naturally) as a result of Adam and Eve flirting with each other without anything premature happening upon which Adam knew his wife and she gave birth
- **Gn10-25** uses the **past perfect** (had been born, **yoolad**) rather than the **past** (**vayivale**). Hence the translation **Ever had already born to him 2 children**: One of them was named **Split** because during his **lifetime the world split** and the name of his brother was **MayHeBeSmall**. [We will return to this Rashi in the second part of the digest: Right now we show it to be an example of the **Rashi past perfect method**]

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Many people incorrectly think that Rashi held that order in the Torah was arbitrary! Not so! Rashi held that biblical order was not exclusively temporal. Other sources of order might be operative. For example in this passage (**Gn04-01**) Rashi uses a causal order: The fact that Adam and Eve were flirting led to the snake desiring her
- I have translated **Gn02-25** as Adam and Eve were flirting without anything premature happening; the usual translation is Adam and Eve were naked without embarrassment. Why did I deviate?
- First: There is a tendency to paint the Biblical Narrative in magical and exaggerated colors. *Adam and Eve were naked; The snake spoke*. But snakes don't speak and ordinary people do not go around naked.
- Second: Throughout the Bible if we can avoid the magical and exaggerated we should do so. This is especially true if we use standard ways to translate words
- In our case
 - Biblical personality types are frequently described using animals; Judah is a lion; the Jews are sheep; etc. Here the snake has the same meaning it has when used in the English 'You snake': It refers to a slimy personality
 - The word *arum* meaning naked is frequently used metaphorically in the bible.
 - ❖ For example, in the very next verse, the snake is described as cunning: The word for cunning is naked! Why? Because his logic was crisp, exposed, and to the point, so to speak undressed
 - ❖ Similarly Rashi on **Gn03-07** interprets the verse *Adam and Eve knew they were naked* to mean *Adam and Eve knew they were vulnerable*
 - ❖ So too here at **Gn02-25**: We have interpreted *naked* to indicate flirting the talk of naked people. They flirted without anything premature happening (they were not yet aware of their vulnerability). It was this that the snake saw and led him to want a relationship with Eve

DISCUSSION POINTS - CONTINUED

- You don't have to interpret **Gn02-25** the way I did. You can still appreciate the grammatical approach to Rashi that I gave that there is a distinction between simple past and past perfect.
- I should give some acknowledgements This grammatical principle is not my own. I attend edlectures with Rabbi Dr Joseph Baer Soloveitchik (the Rav) for 7 years and I learned this principle on **Gn04-01** when he in fact spoke on that very verse
- The idea that *the snake was human and means a slimy person* also comes from the Rav's lectures.
- While the Rav did not interpret **Gn02-25** the way I did, my interpretation is less magical and more realistic. It is consistent with the way the Hebrew verb is used in the very next sentence and with how Rashi himself rejects interpreting Arum as naked in **Gn03-07** and instead interprets it as vulnerable.
- To sum up: I believe **ayin-resh-mem** can have a variety of meanings including *cunning* (naked raw idea not dressed up), *vulnerable* (undressed), *flirting* (the talk of naked people). I believe this more consistent with the story and more realistic. But you don't have to believe it to enjoy this digest.
- I could say more on this but this is not the place to interpret **Gn03!!!**

Verse Text Gn11-25a,b

- *Side had already had 2 children:*
- *The nickname of one was Split: Because the world split in his lifetime*
- *The nickname of his brother was MayHeBeSmall*

Rashi Text:

- i) **MayHeBeSmall** was nicknamed that way because he always acted small. For this reason he merited the many descendants mentioned in the verses afterwards
- ii) **Side** was a big prophet. Because he called his son **Split** referring to the **Split** that would happen when the world was split up (Ch11) by the Tower of Babel

Supplementary Material

- We have in the previous part of this digest explained the translation of **past perfect: Had already had 2 children**
- To clarify the Rashi I again have embedded the translation of the Rashi in the verse. Thus instead of using the Hebrew names **Eyver, Peleg, Yaktan**, I use the English translations **Side, Split, MayHeBeSmall**
- I have used the translation **nickname** instead of the traditional **name**. This will be explained in the coming slides (as well as why I used English translations for the names.
- We will also explain why Rashi called **Side** a **big prophet**

RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We use the Rashi Meaning Method.
- The meaning method besides including dictionary meaning also includes Figures of Speech
- Sometimes a punchy translation can capture the Rashi comment and make it obvious
- Thus I have translated Shaym as nickname instead of name.
- The nuances of nickname versus name should be clear
 - The name is what people call you
 - The nickname describes what you are known for
- Hence interpreting the nickname is part of the simple meaning of the text

Application of Rashi Rule to **Gn11-25a:b**

EXAMPLE 1: He called his name **Split** because during his lifetime the world was **split**

In this example the Bible actually explains the nickname

EXAMPLE 2: **Yaktan** is the verb conjugation for the verb **Kuph-Teth-Nun** and literally means **MayHeBeMadeSmall**. This is consistent with the Rashi comment

EXAMPLES 3: **Side** is explained by the Rabbis: He was on one **side of the world** while the rest of the world was on another side.

We have not explained why these people are called this way. We also have not justified why this is the simple reading of the text, the Peshat. We do so in the discussion points.

DISCUSSION POINTS - Nickname

- What justifies us in interpreting names? Is it an optional sermonic activity? Or is it the intended meaning of the text?
- This question was addressed by Dr Leibowitz a famous Tanach and Rashi teacher. At the beginning of Shemoth she explains her opinion that the interpretation of names is sermonic, an option, typically applied by the Rabbis
- Other people, including modern authors, agree with Dr Leibowitz
- Therefore, I was most pleased to see a Matnoth Kehunah commentary on the Great Midrash (Midrash Rabbah) on this verse who explains that
 - A name by itself should not be interpreted
 - When the Bible says “*his/her name was such and such*” then it should be interpreted
- Following the methods of Rashiyomi I interpret the Matnoth Kehunah as re-interpreting the word **name** as **nickname**. This in fact makes sense, since the word **name** in Hebrew comes from the same word as **place**. So the **name** is a person’s **place**, what (s)he is known for, his/her **nickname**.
- So if the Bible says his nickname was **MayHeBeMadeSmall**, we are certainly justified, as part of interpreting the simple meaning of the text, the Peshat, as interpreting that name
- Similarly if the Bible says his nickname was **Split** because the world **split** in his days then we are certainly justified, as part of interpreting the simple meaning of the text, the Peshat, as interpreting that name
- Although it doesn’t say **the person whose name was Side** (**Eyver**) but just calls him **Side**, still as the Matnoth Kehunah points out, since his two sons are nicknamed it is reasonable that his name (which is a Hebrew word meaning **Side**) also has meaning.

DISCUSSION POINTS – Great Prophet

- We have left to explain why Rashi called Side a Great Prophet
- True: Rashi explains that the nicknaming of his son, Split, was a prophecy. But is that all? Also, why call him a great prophet.
- My own opinion is that Rashi's reason is *part* of a total reason which I now give
- Recall as we discussed earlier that Adam and Eve were approached by the Snake since Adam and Eve had a prolonged flirtation relationship without any premature accidents while the Snake, the Slimy people, do not have such prolonged relationships. Because they lived together there was friction which led to the sin.
- This problem, of coexistence, with people who are not like you, continued to exist. The verse **Gn11-25** describes three stages in solving this problem as indicated by Side and his two children MayHeBeMadeSmall and Split
 - At first Side, lived in Society but lived on the Side. He stayed away from the main center of things. He stayed away from the central culture and thereby hoped to avoid the repeat of the sins of Adam/Eve
 - But that didn't work. Society approached him and his children. They gave them honor in exchange for joining them. So in Stage 2, Side blessed his son MayHeBeMadeSmall. The adding of a Yud to a name is similar to Moses prayer when he changed Hosea to Joshua: MayGodSaveYou. According to Rashi this blessing worked and MayHeBeMadeSmall had many descendants because he was small and let them grow and be big
 - But that wasn't enough. Finally, Side saw that the solution to the human problem, the coexistence of incompatible people, required the Split.
- Now we know what Rashi called him a Great Prophet. Not only because he knew the world will split, but because He spent 3 stages of his life preparing for the eventual separation.

DISCUSSION POINTS – Epilogue

- We mentioned
 - Adam's approach of complete coexistence which led to sin
 - Sides approach of separation
 - We have left to point out that Jacob, the Patriarch, who in fact studied with Shaym and Ever, completed the solution
- Jacob taught of separation mingled with co-existence. That is why his 12 sons were separated into four groups of three each three having similar characteristics. The 12 tribes joined as a whole on pilgrimages to acknowledge the unity of God but otherwise each stuck to his group
- Thus we have comingled separation and existence.