

Rashiyomi
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Gn28-11d

Rashiyomi@GMail.Com

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Produced by Rashiomi.Com
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 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*



The Ten Components of a Rashi Comment

1) The true underlying reason (4 pillars)

It may not be explicitly or completely mentioned

2) The form Rashi expresses himself in

May use puns, gematriahs, or coincidences

3) Examples/Paradigms/Possible approaches(o)

This involves reasonable speculation; it is not in the verse

4) Moralistic / exhortative points (o)

This is not part of the Rashi comment but extra

5) Explicit statement of methodology (optional)

Only about 10% of Rashis clearly state method

6) Readings of Simple People (*peshat*) (o)

This does not occur frequently. It is also not “the” reason

7) (Failed) Attempts of explanation (*derash*)(o)

Infrequently done. Saying its derash usually means its wrong

8) Underlying Biblical text(s) commented on

Very often the true verse commented on is elsewhere

9) (Number of) points made (maybe more than 1)

A Rashi might make 2 points with 2 underlying methods

10) Cross references to similar Rashis

e.g. Rashis full statement of reason may occur elsewhere



Verse Text Gn28-11d

- (v11) *Jacob took from place's stones*
- (v18) *Jacob took the stone*
- (v18) *Jacob poured oil on its head*
- [Also in text: The stones first formed a surrounding to his head in which to sleep; later the stones were used to create an altar]

Rashi Text:

- a. He made them a semicircle around his head
- b. Because he was afraid of bad animals
- c. The stones started fighting with each other
- d. Let the head of this righteous person be on me
- e. God immediately made them one stone
- f. Therefore in v18 it says **stone** in singular

Supplementary Material

- We can illustrate Rashi components
- Item f) is an explicit method statement
- Items a,b) illustrates “Paradigms”
- Items c,d,e are moralistic/exhortative
- More will be said in the next few slides

RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- **Rashi Parallelism Rule:**

- Quite simply, this rule states that if a verse
- **Repeats** a phrase with slightly different nuances then
- The **2nd repetition accepts the 1st and builds further on it.**
- We show examples below.
- This formulation ***accept and add*** or ***accept and build***
- Was introduced by James Kugel in his book
- **The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History**
- It is a very deep explanation of biblical Parallelism

- **Rashi Grammar Rule:**

- Biblical Hebrew like other languages has words for **singular and plural**
- The technical details need not concern us. Suffice it to say that
 - **Singular** connotes 1
 - **Plurality** connotes multiplicity

- **Rashi Meaning Rule:**

- Words in Biblical Hebrew and all language have **connotations and denotations**
- Two synonyms will very often differ in their connotations
- One must read the biblical text hearing the connotations, denotations, and nuances

PARALLELISM EXAMPLE: Ex20-03 repeats the prohibition against idolatry. Here is the text:

- You should not have (possess) other gods...
- You should not make for personal use (that is monetary gain) idols and any image....

The Rashi parallelism principle requires that the 2nd repetition accept the 1st repetition and build further on it (Accept and build or Accept and add) In this case

- **First repetition:** You should not have, that is, possess, idolatry
- **Second repetition:** Besides prohibiting full possession, you should not partially posses or gain from idols such as by manufacturing them and selling them to others for gain

Here the two repetitions reflect a building from a prohibition of full possession to a prohibition of just gain.

• GRAMMAR EXAMPLE:

- Nu13, the story of the spies, provides a punchy example of use of singular-plural
- The entire story is plural since there were many spies
 - ❖ Thus the Bible states **they went, they spied, they came, they cut, they carried,**
 - ❖ But there is one exception: **He came to Chevron**
- The details need not concern us but Rashi does come to the conclusion that only one spy came to Chevron
- Rashi conjectures who that spy was and why he detoured to Chevron
- This need not concern us now
- This was brought to show the power of singular / plural

• MEANING EXAMPLE:

- The following charming example occurs in Lv02-05a, Lv02-07a
- Restful-flour offerings can be offered on either a
 - ❖ **Griddle** / frying pan/ skillet or
 - ❖ **Pot**
- As an example of a Rashi inference *based on these synonyms*
 - ❖ **Griddle** cooking makes the flour **hard** (as all oil is consumed since it is on the fire)
 - ❖ **Pot** cooking makes the flour **soft** since the oil does not burn and mixes with the flour

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn28-11/18

- Please reread the verse and Rashi slide
- Rashi first applies the parallelism rule: **stones/stone** shows a **plural/singular** contradiction
- When reading Rashi very often one has to fill in the reasons. There is a 3rd parallelism1!!!
- Jacob did not pour oil on the stone but on its **head**.
- **Head** normally connotes one part of body (the top part). Thus the one stone seemed to have parts.
- Let us summarize
 - Jacob initially took **stones (plural)**
 - When he got up he took the **stone (singular)**
 - And poured oil on its **head** (connotation of multiple components)
- Rashi
 - Does partially present his method (parallelism)
 - But does not reconcile or infer from the parallelism
- I therefore offer the following explanation (Not explicit in Rashi)
 - Since Rashi made an altar of the stones which had a head, the three stones probably fit snugly together
 - So they were three (maybe more) stones; but they could be horizontally snapped together
 - Such a snapping (absence of holes) prevented small animals (mice, squirrels) from creeping in
 - They also allowed turning the stones vertically with the head, body and feet snapping securely into each other to make an altar

DISCUSSION POINTS

- We have much to discuss on this Rashi.
- In fact, the most frequent complaint I receive, and the reason some people do not sign up for Rashiyomi or leave is because
- They come to hear Rashi not to hear Dr Hendel!
- Unfortunately in this Rashi, and in many Rashis, fill-ins must be made
- In order to respond to these critics I have introduced a new permanent slide, **The 10 Components of a Rashi Comment**
- It is very important when discussing a Rashi to realize that different parts of Rashi have different purposes
- True: Rashi says **the stones fought for the right to be a pillow for the righteous Jacob's head and God made them one stone**
- Certainly that is not in the verse!! Certainly Rashi could not have intended that as the straightforward meaning of the verse
- I classify these Rashi comments as **morally exhortative**.
- Rashi uses the principle of **anthropomorphism**: He shows how people want to have the merit (*zechus*) of helping the leader
- The Rashi also shows that God helps these people fulfill their wishes
- How is this classified? This is classified as a **moral/exhortative** afterthought, it is done after the Rashi is understood!
- It is neither *peshat* nor *derash*: It is an afterthought
- What about the Rashi itself? What about the idea that there were multiple rocks that fit together into one rock?
- There is much discussion in the midrashim on this verse
- Some midrashim say there were 12 stones: Jacob said if they unify that means that unlike Abraham (who had Ishmael) and Isaac (who had Esau) his children would be whole
- Other midrashim say there were 3 stones corresponding to the three Patriarchs (I believe there were three since with head goes body and feet). Also, three stones are the minimal you need to create a semi-circle
- Thus there are many approaches to the plural/singular

DISCUSSION POINTS

- What about the Rashi comments that
 - He made the stones in a semi-circle around his head
 - He did this because he wanted to protect himself from animals (like mice and squirrels)
- How do we classify these Rashi statements
- They are neither *peshat* nor *derash*.
- Rather they are reasonable speculations, examples, paradigms of what a sleeping person would do with stones
- The main contributions of Rashiyomi are
 - To identify the core Peshat: In this case the singular / plural parallelism as well as the nuances of head
 - To identify the various components of Rashi and how they function
 - To identify the overarching principles (the four pillars) that will work in all Rashis
- Finally, there is a Talmudic adage: There is no learning without novelty
- I am proud to contribute to this Rashi that the word head (head of the stone) implies a single stone unit with multiple components like any head. The commenters I have seen do not mention this and except for the midrash that mentions 3 stones it is not even hinted at.