

Rashiyomi
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Gn32-05a

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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*



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 Gn32-05a

- [Verses discussing Jacob's message to brother Esau whom he fled for fear of being murdered for stealing blessings]
- *Thus should you say to my lord, Esau*
- *I have stayed over with Laban and delayed till now*
- *I have oxen and donkeys, herds servants, and maids, and I desire to send them to my lord to find favor in your eyes*

Rashi Text:

- a. I stayed over, that is, I was not appointed a city official. You therefore have no reason to hate me for stealing the blessings of our father, be a leader to your brothers, since they were not fulfilled!
- b. Another matter: Stayed over numerically [assigning a=1, b=2, c=3] has the same value as 613 the number of commandments. I fulfilled all 613 commandments despite my living with Laban. [I am still religious]

Supplementary Material

- *This Rashi has a personal fondness since it was this Rashi as taught to me by my teacher, Rabbi Dr. Joseph Soloveitchick “the Rav” which got me interested in Rashi. I was fascinated that the fanciful numerical Rashi could be made grammatically sounds*

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 requires cohesive paragraphs
- Every paragraph should have
 - A **theme** sentence
 - A **development** of that theme sentence
 - The Jones-Faulkner book **Writing Good Prose** beautifully illustrates **development rules**

- **Rashi Meaning Rule:**

- Biblical Hebrew like all language has **synonyms**
- Their choice must be heard the same way a native speaker hears them
- Each synonym is heard with its 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 (Dt11-01:07)

Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always. And know this day; for

- I speak not with your children
 - which have not known, and
 - which have not seen
 - ❖ the chastisement of the Lord your God,
 - ❖ his greatness,
 - ❖ his mighty hand, and
 - ❖ his stretched out arm, And
 - ❖ his miracles, and
 - ❖ his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and to all his land; And
 - ❖ what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses, and to their chariots;
 - ❖ how he made the water of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued after you, and
 - ❖ how the Lord has destroyed them till this day; And
 - ❖ what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came into this place; And
 - ❖ what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the goods that were in their possession, in the midst of all Israel;
- But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did.

Therefore shall you keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that

Rashi: [The paragraph is understood as follows] The two yellow-highlighted phrases (1) I speak not with your children 2) but your eyes have seen) go together [with the diamond bullet developing this theme sentence]

- **MEANING (Synonym) 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 Gn32-05:06

- Please reread the verse and Rashi slide
- Jacob says **I stayed over** by Laban despite the fact that
 - He lived in the city 20 years
 - Married two women
 - Worked for a local person
- The proper synonym is **I resided** not **I stayed over**
- By saying **I stayed over** Jacob nuanced a lack of permanence and lack of involvement in the city
- We can use the **10 components of Rashi** (see a previous slide with this info) to explain this
- The **true underlying reason** behind the Rashi comment is the **Meaning Synonym method**:
 - **Reside** versus **Stayed over**
- However the **form** with which Rashi expresses this thought is a numerical play on letters (Gematria)
- The **form** was not the **true underlying reason** but rather a mnemonic to help you remember it
- Furthermore, the Rashi comment **I did not become a town official or recognized town person** is an application of the **Example/Paradigm/Possible approach**. That is, not becoming a town official or recognized is **a good example** of **staying over**. Rashi has no way of knowing if Jacob ever became a town official. It is simply a good illustration of his statement **I stayed over**.

Application of Rashi Rule to **Gn32-05:06**

- Please reread the verse and Rashi slide
- Did you notice the phrase in Rashi **another matter**
- Returning to the **10 Components of Rashi**, this phrase **another matter**
- May imply that Rashi was commenting on two aspects of the verse
- If you did not know this you might think both comments apply to the same phrase
- Not so
- Rashi comments on the **paragraph theme and development** of Jacob's message
- What was the **theme** of that message, How is it **developed**. Rashi is very explicit in answering
- Rashi accomplishes this using **parallelism** of this passage with the blessing Jacob received
- The table below summarizes

Isaac's blessing Gn27-28:29	Gn32-05:06
God will give you [wealth] heavenly dew and earthly plumpness	I do have wealth [oxen, donkeys, herd, servants and maids]
You will be a leader to your brothers	I just stayed over. I am no leader! Hence you shouldn't hate me for stealing the blessings since I don't have them!!![Rashi]

DISCUSSION POINTS

- We have many discussion points on this Rashi
- First: I acknowledge my teacher “The Rav” for showing how a Rashi with a fanciful form (numerology)
- Can be placed on a sound basis
- It was the Rav who suggested the synonym approach: **I resided** versus **I stayed over**
- Notice, that I have added to the Rav’s explanation of Rashi
- I have shown that Rashi had two points the other point being the paragraph organization.
- Very often readers ask me what the classic Rashi commenters say.
- In such a case we can look at the **Sifsay Chachamim**, **Gur Aryeh**, and **Mizrachi**
- One of them makes a distinction between **I stayed over** and **I was by Lavan** (**hayiithi**)
- Another makes the distinction between **I stayed over** and **I was late because of Lavan** (**Aycharti**)
- Both of these commenters make use of the **Rashi Synonym method**
- I believe the Rav’s approach: **Reside** versus **Stayed over** is more succinct, clearer, and contrastive
- You will notice that in discussing the paragraph structure I stated that
 - Jacob’s statement **I have ox, donkeys, herd, servants, and maids** as meaning
 - **I have wealth**
 - But Rashi says the opposite: **The blessing promised me from the dew of heaven and the fat of the land and the wealth I have is neither** (Playing down even the wealth)
- Why did I deviate?
- First it is OK to use the literal Rashi approach in the contrastive table on the last slide
- I wanted to emphasize that even without this insight of Rashi, even if we say Jacob emphasized his wealth, we would still have a valid paragraph unity

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.