

Rashiyomi
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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 Gn40-05

- [Joseph was in charge of the prison where the master baker and master bartender were imprisoned by Pharoh]
- *They dreamt a shared dream [the dream of both of them]*
 - *Each person his dream*
 - {*On the same night*
[on one night]}
 - *(and) Each person according to his dream's interpretation*
- *The baker and bartender*
 - *that were [assigned] to Pharoh*
 - *That were imprisoned in prison*

Rashi Text:

- a. They dreamt a dream, the two of them this is the simplistic meaning of the text
- b. The midrashic meaning is each one dreamt the dream of both of them [shared dream]: that person's dream and the interpretation of the others dream
- c. That is why it says The Baker saw that Joseph interpreted favorably
- d. Each person dreamt according to the interpretation corresponding to their future

Supplementary Material

- This Rashi nicely illustrates the entire idea of Peshat & Derash (Simple meaning and homily)
- It looks like the verse means *They both dreamt a dream*
- Why then does Rashi say *They both dreamt a shared dream (dream of both)*

RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- **Rashi Grammar Rule**

- Biblical Hebrew like other languages allows **apposition**.
- A good example of **apposition** in English might be
 - **Dr. Hendel, President of RashiYomi, publishes a weekly digest**
- Here the phrase **President of RashiYomi** is in **apposition** to **Dr. Hendel**
- The sentence reads fine without the appositive phrase: **Dr Hendel publishes a weekly digest**
- The **appositive** gives added information on Dr Hendel: **Dr Hendel is President of RashiYomi**
- **Apposition** allows combining the two sentences together
- In
 - **English**: The appositive phrase is **right next** to the noun it modifies
 - **Hebrew**: The appositive phrase can **come after** the sentence.

- **Rashi Meaning-Synecdoche Rule:**

- **Synecdoche** is a figure of speech
- It is present in all languages
- It says that you can name something by a distinguished **good example**
 - For example: **Honey** can also mean **sweet** as honey is a **good example** of sweetness
 - **Give me a hand** means **you** (not your hand) **should help me** [But using your hands is a **good example** of helping]
 - A **walkthrough** can mean a **step by step explanation** since walking is a **good example** breaking up a journey into steps.

RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- **Rashi Reference Rule**
- The **Rashi Reference rule** is a very simple but very powerful rule
- It says that the meaning of one verse can be illuminated by another verse
- Scholars refer to this as **intertextuality**, commentary within the biblical text on itself
- The most famous example comes from the Passover Aggadah
- **Dt26-05d** states
 - *My father was a lost Aramean;*
 - *He went down to Egypt with only a few people, and*
 - *There he became a great nation*
- To comment on this verse, Rashi cites another verse, **Dt10-22**
 - *With 70 souls, your fathers went down to Egypt*
- The Rashi comment combines these two verses using the simple but powerful **Reference** method
 - He went down to Egypt with only a few people. **Rashi:** With 70 souls
- Here we see the simplest example of the **Rashi Reference** method:
- The intertextual explanation of the phrase a few people is further clarified as 70 people.

GRAMMAR EXAMPLE (Is63-07)

- *The kindnesses of God, I will commemorate, the praises of God*
- In this example
 - the praises of God is in apposition to
 - The kindnesses of God
- In other words, the single sentence really is two sentences
 - The kindnesses of God I will commemorate
 - The kindnesses of God is what you praise God for
- An alternative way of looking at the apposition is conjunctively
- I will commemorate the kindnesses of God and the praises of God
- This example is typical of many examples throughout the Bible.

MEANING-SYNECDOCHE EXAMPLE:

- Ex40-22 states
 - *They placed the Temple Table in the Temple-Tent*
 - *On the Northern thigh of the Temple*
 - *Outside the Holy-of-Holy veil*
- Rashi explains:
 - **Thigh** means [is a **synecdoche**] for **side**, like the thigh of a person which is on his side.
 - Rashi further clarifies: **Northern Thigh** simply means the **northern half** of the Temple
- So it wasn't strictly North (say against the wall) but rather in the northern half
- Therefore the **synecdoche** sees a person's **two thighs** as a good example of **northern and southern half**.
- The reader should notice that before reading this verse they did not think of **thigh** as meaning **side**
- We might say that **synecdoche like other figures of speech create meaning**
- **Synecdoche expands what words can refer to**

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05

- Please reread the slide with the verse and Rashi example.
- **Step 1:** First we explain the explanation that Rashi calls *peshat*
- According to this explanation the verse reads: *They dreamt a dream, the two of them*
- In other words
 - Rashi explains the phrase *the two* as meaning *the two of them*
 - *The two* (*the two of them*) is in apposition to *they*. It explains who the *they* were
- **Step 2:** Next we explain the explanation that Rashi called *derash*.
- According to this example the Baker and Bartender had a *shared dream*
- *Shared dream*? But what is a *shared dream*?
- *A shared dream* is a dream that two people have about the same matter
 - For example if a couple is in a car accident they might both dream on the car accident
 - This type of a *shared dream* where two people experience a trauma is called *dream meshing*
 - That dream is also called a *shared dream*.
- It is called *shared* even though the details of the dreams differ in detail for each person

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05 (continued)

- **Step 3:** How the verse language indicates a shared dream
- The verse literally says
 - *They dreamt the dream of two of them*
- Rashi interprets the phrase dream of two of them as meaning shared dream
- Rashi here uses the Synecdoche principle:
- The synecdoche principle allows you to name something by a good characteristic
- In this case
 - Ordinary dreams are the dreams of one person
 - Shared dreams are the dreams of two people
 - Thus two-ness becomes illustrative of sharedness
- **Step 4:** So far we have given two explanations
 - The Peshat explanation of Rashi follows the grammatical apposition rule
 - The Derash explanation of Rashi follows the synecdoche principle
- Many scholars stop here. For example they might say
 - There are two legitimate ways to interpret the verse
 - Each way follows a sound interpretive principle
 - We therefore have no way of knowing which interpretation is preferable
- The position of Rashiyomi however is that we can show that one explanation is preferable
- We proceed to defend the synecdoche interpretation (the derash) using the Rashi Reference method

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05 (continued)

- **Step 5a:** Let us look at the description of these two dreams two verses down (where they tell their dream to Joseph)
 - *We have dreamt **a** dream*
 - *No one is interpreting **it** for us*
- Do you notice how the two dreams are called **a** and **it** indicating a singular dream
- This shows that the two dreams were one dream in fact a **shared dream**
- This particular shared dream is an example of dream meshing
 - Two people experience a common trauma
 - They each dream about this trauma
 - However, the details of the two dreams reflect individual characteristics

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05 (continued)

- **Step 5b:** We now again use the **Reference principle**. We in fact cite the same verse where the shared dream is mentioned
- We show that there is emphasis that this dream of two has characteristics of dream meshing
 - 1) *They dreamt the dream of two*
 - 2) *Each person his dream on the same night*
 - 3) *Each person with the interpretation (of the dream that would eventually happen)*
 - 4) *The Baker and Bartender*
 - a) *That (worked for Pharoh)*
 - b) *That were imprisoned in the prison.*
- As can be seen
 - **4a and 4b** refer to a **traumatic incident: Royal professional imprisoned**
 - Items **2 and 3** show this single dream nevertheless was **individual** for each person
 - That is exactly the criteria for **dream meshing** and **a shared dream**.

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05 (continued)

- Step 6: So far we have
 - (Step 1) Showed the Peshat (Grammatical) interpretation of the verse
 - (Steps 2,3) Showed the Derash (Synecdoche) interpretation of the verse
 - (Steps 5a,5b) Used nuances in the surrounding text which indicate
 - ❖ the derash (Synecdoche) interpretation is the most reasonable
 - ❖ The synecdoche interpretation reflects what really happened
 - ❖ What really happened is that the two of them experienced dream meshing
- We have left to explain why Rashi
 - Called one interpretation Peshat
 - Called the other interpretation Derash
- We can intensify the question:
 - Shouldn't Peshat (simple straightforward meaning) of a verse correspond to what happened
 - Shouldn't derash (homily) refer to read-in ideas?

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05 (continued)

- **Step 7a:** In this step I explain the position of Rashiyomi on the terms **Peshat/Derash**
- **Derash** refers to **process** and **interpretive activity**
 - That interpretive activity might lead to
 - ❖ A homily, a fake idea,
 - ❖ Very often Rashi shows that further analysis refutes the Derash
 - ❖ But derash does not mean homily: It means the act of **interpreting**
 - That **interpretive idea** might lead to the simple straightforward textual meaning
 - ❖ In this verse the **derash**, the **act** of looking at **references**, justified the interpretation
 - ❖ So we can't say that the **Derash is the Peshat**
 - ❖ We can say that the **Activity of Derash led to recognition of the Peshat**
 - ❖ In English: **The activity of research on references enabled understanding of the simple straightforward meaning of the verse, what really happened**

Application of Rashi Rule to Gn40-05 (continued)

- Step 7b:
- Peshat has two (contradictory meanings)
 - It can refer to the bottom line (the simple conclusion without all the analysis)
 - It can also refer to an off-the-cuff superficial (overly simple) reading
 - ❖ In this verse
 - ❖ It is easy to look at one phrase and use the concept of apposition
 - ❖ *They dreamt a dream, the two of them*
 - ❖ But closer analysis shows that this is inconsistent with references to a dream
- Step 7c: A person can ask: How then do I know what really happened
- The answer is simple:
 - Perform the activities of thorough analysis of the verse
 - Use all Rashi rules: Reference, Grammar, Meaning-Synecdoche
 - Then certain meanings are
 - Superficial (inconsistent with all the other nuances)
 - Simple bottom lines (what really happened)
 - Reflect activity of analysis (Derash)

Application of Rashi Rule to **Gn40-05 (continued)**

- **Step 7d:** We summarize our views on Peshat and Derash in the following table

Term	Core meaning	It could	It could also
Peshat	Simple, unencumbered	Mean Superficial, simplistic (So not a good interpretation)	Mean Bottom line, unencumbered conclusion (So it reflects what really happened)
Derash	Activity of analysis Applying many Rules to a verse	Lead to a homily. Something that has some defense but can be refuted (So not a good interpretation)	Lead to the simple straightforward (Peshat) meaning of what really happened.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- This Rashi has generated many fascinating points.
- This digest has reviewed many key ideas and principles of fundamental importance to all scholars
 - How does one perform, **derash**, analyze a text (Answer: Using multiple Rashi rules)
 - Rashi rules can involve
 - ❖ other verses (**Reference**)
 - ❖ Known **grammatical** principles (e.g. **Apposition**)
 - ❖ Newly created meanings by **Figures of Speech** (e.g. **shared dreams**)
 - How does one arrive at incorrect superficial simplistic interpretations (Answer: Only use a few rules)
 - How does one arrive at what really happened (Peshat)(Answer: Multiple rules confirm the interpretation)
- We invite all Rashi scholars, religious and secular, to study this digest carefully since it illumines a new approach.