

Rashiyomi
Volume 32, Number 14
© *Rashiyomi.Inc, Dec 26, 2019*
Gn44-18b

Rashiyomi@GMail.Com

Copyright statement: Rashiyomi.com/copyrights.htm

Permission to cite:

- a) with attribution to Rashiyomi.com,
 - b) prohibition of monetary gain and
 - c) Other requirements
- as stated in full detail at the url just indicated.

Produced by RashiYomi.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 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*



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 Gn44-18b

- [Benjamin had just been apprehended for theft. Judah and Joseph speak]
- *Joseph: What is this you have done; don't you know that a person like me can divine?*
- *Judah: What can we speak to my Lord, what can we say, what can we justify, God has found the sins of your servants; we are all slaves to my lord*
- *Joseph: God Forbid: Only the thief is my slave; the rest of you are free*
- *Judah: May I speak to you; please don't be angry for you are like Pharoh*

Rashi Text:

Please don't be angry: From here you learn that Judah spoke harshly to Joseph

Supplementary Material

- *Someone recently asked me about this Rashi and cited Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky.*
- *To this we might add comments of the Mizrachi and the Gur Aryeh*
- *The basic issue is why Judah's speech is seen as harsh.*
- *Another issue is whether this is the simple meaning of the text (Peshat)*

RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- Rashi Meaning → Figures of Speech → Antiphrasis, Verbal Irony
- One of the four Pillars of Rashi is the **Meaning** method
- The **Meaning** method includes **Figures of Speech** as used in all languages
- One Figure of Speech method is **antiphrasis** or verbal Irony
- The words may sound scary but **antiphrasis** or **verbal irony** simply means
 - **Saying one thing**
 - **But meaning the exact opposite**
- Here are some examples:
 - You receive a letter from the IRS with a fine for incorrect payment of taxes
 - You exclaim, “**Just what I needed today**” ← You obviously mean the opposite
- Another example might be
 - A woman spent an hour in the beauty parlor having her hair done
 - When she comes out someone plays a prank and sprays her with water
 - She exclaims “**A perfect ending to my hour in the beauty parlor. What a funny prank**”
- In both these examples the person means the opposite of what they say
- We can use various descriptions of this
 - Antiphrasis
 - Verbal irony
 - Verbal sarcasm
- An important point is that a requirement for antiphrasis is
- A **clear cue** that the statement is intended to **mean its opposite**

ANTIPHRASTIC EXAMPLE (Gn44-18b)

- To prove cynicism one needs to examine tone
- Here is what Judah wanted to say
 - A. What can we speak to my lord; what can we say; what can we justify; God has found our sin; we are slaves to my lord; both we and the person with whom the stolen goblet was found
 - B. Joseph: God Forbid. Only the person who stole is my slave; the rest of you go up to your father
 - C. Judah: May I request you listen to me
 - D. May I please sit [as slave] instead of the youngster who stole
 - E. Because I guaranteed the youngster to my father as follows: If I will not bring him back I have sinned to you all the days
- Judah wanted to say A,C,D,E. Notice the contrite tone
- Let us next examine what Judah actually said

ANTIPHRASTIC EXAMPLE (Gn44-18b) – **Actually said** (Judah added C1,2,3 in red font)

- Here is what **Judah actually said** (See the additions C1,C2,C2 besides A,B,D,E)

- A. **What can we speak to my lord; what can we say; what can we justify; God has found our sin; we are slaves to my lord; both we and the person with whom the stolen goblet was found**
- B. Joseph: God Forbid. Only the person who stole is my slave; the rest of you go up to your father
- C. **Judah: May I request you listen to me**
- You are like Pharoh**
 - You asked do you have family. We said ...we have a younger brother home with his father and he alone is left to mother and his father likes him You said bring him down so I can see him**
 - We said, he can't leave his father because it would kill him You said: If you don't bring him you can't come again. We told this to our father who protested if you take him an accident will happen and my old age will go to hell. If I return without the child he will die**
- D. **May I please sit [as slave] instead of the youngster who stole**
- E. **Because I guaranteed the youngster to my father as follows: If I will not bring him back I have sinned to you all the days**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Let us carefully discuss the tone
- Sections A, C, D, E on the previous slide in yellow font are very contrite. Here are some quotes
 - What can we say (A)
 - May I request you listen to me (C)
 - May I please sit in the child's stead (D)
 - Because I guaranteed the child to my father (E)
- Now let us look at the new material in red font on the previous slide
 - C1) You are like Pharaoh
 - ❖ But comparing a subordinate to a leader is rebellion as we find with
 - ✓ The Jews who compared Moses to God (See Nu22-05 and the punishment afterwards)
 - ✓ Or Uriah who preceded Joab, the general, to the King (The Talmud so classifies 2Sa11-11)
 - ❖ The Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh say “but Judah was not explicit only by hint”
 - ❖ But as the two examples I just cited show, rebellion by hint is considered rebellion
 - ❖ This is also the practice in politics throughout the world (that innuendos are considered explicit)
 - C2,C3) Judah claims that Judah told Joseph that there is risk to his father's life
 - Judah further claimed that he informed Joseph about the fondness of Jacob for Benjamin
 - ❖ But an examination of Gn42:18-24 shows that no such conversation took place
 - ❖ On the contrary the brothers said they were being punished for the murder of Joseph
 - ❖ It follows that Judah was blatantly lying and fabricating emotionally laden items to Joseph
 - ❖ This should not be done to royal staff
- Thus we see that the new material (C1,2,3) is aggressive; it contradicts the contriteness in A,B,C,D,E
- Hence the Rashi comment: Judah was not contrite, he was angry, he spoke antiphrastically
- The cue indicating this, is the blatant change of tone from contrite to antagonistic and back to contrite

SUMMARY

- We have discussed a lot because verbal irony is sometimes hard to see.
- We therefore summarize main points
- From where did Rashi derive the verbal irony
- Ans. From the contrast that
 - Judah was contrite (What can we say)
 - Judah accused Joseph of murdering Jacob and knowing about it[which was false]
- Are there other supportive evidence
- Ans. Rashi mentions that the statement
 - His brother died(referring to Joseph)
 - Was a lie (change) from the original We don't know where he is
 - Rashi explains For fear that Joseph would ask to bring Joseph
- Rashi expects readers to see the other omissions such as
 - The lie that no one ever mentioned that Benjamin couldn't leave his father
- Rashi only mentioned the non-obvious changes but expects the reader to review all of them

SUMMARY CONTINUED

- Explain Rashi's language: From here we learn that Judah spoke harshly
 - Rashi literally says on the verse phrase You are like Pharaoh that
 - From here we see that Judah spoke harshly
 - Most people interpret here to refer to the phrase You are like Pharaoh
 - Rashiyomi interprets here to refer to the entire paragraph since
 - The antiphrasism starts with you are like Pharaoh
 - This approach solves several problems in the Rashi commentators
- What about the following Midrashim
 - You are like Pharaoh - You will be cursed the way your ancestor was cursed for abducting Sarah
 - You are like Pharaoh - Your word is meaningless –
 - ❖ You told us we would go free and
 - ❖ Now we are in worse trouble
 - If you anger me I will kill you and Pharaoh
- Ans: Once we establish the verbal irony
 - indicated by the contrast of contriteness - What can we say versus
 - blame- you are killing our father
- It is then natural to search for all inuendoes.
- True we can't be certain which inuendoes were intended and which we read in, but
- The whole point of macho talk is to create enough inuendoes to instill fear
- It doesn't matter what you intended just that the creation of an atmosphere of threat

SUMMARY CONTINUED

- What is the biggest complaint of Judah
- Ans:
 - Judah accused Joseph of murdering Jacob and
 - Accused him of having been warned.
- This is false.
 - The brothers never told Joseph the consequences of Benjamin leaving Jacob.
 - Furthermore Joseph made clear
 - ❖ God Forbid: I only want the person who stole
 - ❖ the rest of you are free to return to your father
- What about the talk in Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh and Kaminetsky distinguishing between "hint" "derash" and "deep peshat"
- How do we classify our text
- Ans: The simple straightforward meaning, the peshat of the
 - The person fined who says "Just what I need" or
 - the woman sprayed with water who says "A perfect match to the 1 hour I just spent doing my hair"
- is that they are antiphrastic, cynical, and engaging in verbal irony.
- It is not deep peshat: It is the spontaneous reaction of any listener.
- The fact that it is not that clear to us is
 - Because we are not use to speaking to Kings and Presidents and Princes.
 - If we were, we would hear the story that way

SUMMARY CONTINUED

- What about the argument (Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, Kaminetsky)
- that Joseph shouldn't be mad because Judah's comments were through inuendo.
- Ans: We have cited
 - the inuendo of the complaining Jews (Moses and God, equating the two) and
 - The inuendo of Uriah ("My Lord Joab and the servants of my Lord (The king))
- Both these cases are seen as improper and rebellion.
- No one defends them as just hints.
- A hinted remark before a King is as good as an explicit remark.