

Rashiyomi
Volume 32, Number 15
© *Rashiyomi, Inc, Jan. 2, 2019*
Gn49-16b

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 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*



Anatomy of Rashi Comment: 10 parts

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 Gn49-16b

- [Jacob's sons had just returned from Jacob's funeral. The brothers send a message to Joseph]
- *Joseph's brother's saw that their father had died*
- *They said: Perhaps Joseph will hate us*
- *And return to us all the evil we did to him*
- *They commanded to Joseph as follows:*
- *Your father commanded prior to death as follows:*
- *Thus should you say to Joseph:*
- *Please! Forgive please the travesty of your brothers,*
- *since they treated you poorly*
- *And now: Please forgive towards the travesty of your servants of your father's God*

Rashi Text:

Your father commanded:

- They changed (fabricated) for peace's sake
- For Jacob never issued such a command
- Because Joseph was not suspect by Jacob

Supplementary Material

- *What is the source of this Rashi?*
- *Is it really because we can't find Jacob so commanding (Aren't there are other cases of references to incidents without confirmation?)*
- *Rashi mentions for peace's sake*
- *Is this Rashi then a derash to teach moral behavior (rather than a statement of the straightforward meaning of the text)*

RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We use the **Rashi Contradiction rule**
- The contradiction rule is a special case of the **Parallelism Rule**
- Contradictions occur frequently in everyday speech.
- They particularly occur with subjective adjectives.
- Here are some examples
- **Example 1:** It was a **giant fly**
- **Analysis:** If it is **fly** then it is **small**; how then can it be a **giant**;
- It however means, that **relative to other flies** it is very **big**
- **Example 2:** Organization X is a **moderate terrorist** group
- **Analysis:** If they are terrorists who kill and torture innocent civilians and children how can they be moderate. It however means that among terrorist groups, they are not as extreme as the very bad ones
- **Example 3:** An elected official might say, “I promised to **eliminate crime**; and indeed thanks to my efforts homicides are down **90%**”

CONTRADICTION EXAMPLE (Nu04-16, Nu08-24)

- The following two verses speak about Levite responsibility
- A) Nu 4:16 From 30 years to 50 years, all those who come to serve (Temple) service or transportation service
- B) Nu. 8:24 From 25 years they come to be assigned to (Temple work) shifts
- **Contradiction**: Do Levites start at 25 or 30?
- Resolution:
 - They come for assignment (training) at 25
 - They actually start service at 30
 - We infer that the training program is 5 years.

Application of Rashi Rule to **Gn49-16b**

- Please reread the slide with the verse and Rashi example.
- Here are three contradictory verses
- **A)** (Jacob to Simon and Levi) For in their anger they [attempted to] kill[ed] a person, and they willfully [attempted] to prevent the ox from having [Jewish] children. Cursed be their temper because it is brazen, and their blowing up because it is harsh (Gn49-05:07)
- **B)** (Joseph to Brothers) Don't be depressed or angry that you sold me here since for purposes of [your] survival, God sent me before you.... You didn't send me here (to Egypt by selling me into slavery); rather God sent me here; He made me advisor to Pharaoh and master over Egypt (Gn45-05,08)
- **C)** Your father commanded....: Please forgive them for their travesty (Gn49-16)
- What is the contradiction
 - Verse **A** clearly says that **Jacob cursed Simon and Levi** for i) attempting to kill Joseph and ii) willfully attempted to prevent him from having children (by selling him into slavery I a foreign land so he could no longer be part of the Jewish people)
 - Verse **B** says that **Joseph already forgave** the brothers
 - How then can Verse **C**
 - ❖ Ask Joseph to forgive when he already had
 - ❖ Cite Jacob as wanting forgiveness when in fact he cursed them

Resolution of the Contradiction

- Rashi resolves this contradiction simply
 - Jacob cursed you for sending me here (Verse A above)
 - Joseph already forgave them (Verse B above)
 - So your statement of a request for forgiveness in the name Jacob (Verse C)
 - **Is a fabrication**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- There are many discussion points discussed below.
- Why call it the contradiction method
 - It is not really a contradiction to say training for Levites at 25, service at 30
 - Why then call it a contradiction
 - Similarly it is not a real contradiction to call something a giant fly
 - Rashi is perfectly open to saying that the name contradiction
 - That name is an exaggeration.
 - Maybe a better name is similarity and contrast
 - But it is not as punchy
 - Also: Our traditions do name this the contradiction method
- Did Jacob really curse Shimon and Levi for trying to kill Joseph
 - Good question. Here are some points
 - The Midrash points out that he never cursed them just their anger
 - True: But he did curse them to be scattered without centralization
 - Also a curse of anger is still a curse (Maybe “a curse their behavior”)

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Was Jacob angry at Shimon and Levi for what they did to Joseph
 - Good question. Rashi interprets the two curses as referring to
 - Schem and Joseph
 - So it is clear that he was also angry about their mistreatment of Joseph
 - The analysis of that Rashi is a separate issue
 - Also: The verse speaks about willfully castrating the ox
 - ❖ Joseph is called Ox (Dt33)
 - ❖ They willfully sold him to slavery
 - ✓ The throwing into the pit (to kill him) was in anger
 - ✓ The selling to Egypt was done willfully
 - ❖ As a slave in Egypt he wouldn't own his own children
 - ❖ And he couldn't teach them to practice Judaism
 - Bottom line: Jacob was angry at Shimon and Levi at least in part for what they did to Joseph and he did issue a curse towards them (which he didn't do for any other child). The curse of being scattered is permanent; it doesn't therefore make sense that he wanted them forgiven.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- What do the other Rashi commenters say
 - They interpret Rashi literally: “We do not find Jacob so commanded”
 - But that is weak. The real punchy point is that the request is a contradiction
 - This contradiction approach is a contribution and novelty of Rashiyomi
- Why then does Rashi say “We do not find Jacob so commanded”
 - If you go the slide with the Anatomy of Rashi. You will find
 - There is the real reason and form.
 - The
 - Form “We do not find” is punchier and shorter than
 - The reason: Listing three verses as contradictions
 - Rashi always chose a punchy form
- What about Rashi’s statement “They lied for the sake of Peace”
 - Again: Go back to the Rashi anatomy slide
 - Rashi may sometimes give a moral or exhortative point to a Rashi
 - This is not part of the Rashi comment on the verse but extra
 - As long as the reader sees it as extra there is no problem