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*Ex09-33a*

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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*



# 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 Ex09-33a

- [This verse is about Moses' prayer to God to stop the 7<sup>th</sup> plague ]
- *Moses left from being with Pharaoh,*
- *And the city*
- *He spread his hands to God*
- *The lighting and hail ceased*
- *And rain did not [even] get to the earth to saturate it.*

## Rashi Text:

- 1) Get to the earth to saturate it means did not get to or did not reach; similar to Dan 09:11 you molded on us the curse and oath
- 2) Menahem ben Saruk listed this in the word-division with [the verse] like molding money [Ez 22:22] language indicating casting or molding metal as the Aramaic translation
- 3) So the verse means that the rain did not mold to the ground – it did not mold to saturate the earth

## Supplementary Material

- *This Rashi will give us an opportunity to see Rashi's deep understanding of biblical grammar*
- *Modern scholars criticize this Rashi because of his lack of knowledge of grammar*
- *On the contrary, Rashi was deeper than these scholars as will be shown*



## **RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI**

- We use the following Rashi rules
  - The Rashi Grammar-Conjugation rule
  - The Rashi Grammar-prepositional connective rule
- The Grammar rule talks about the rules of verb conjugation
  - These rules are familiar to most people from elementary school
  - There are 4 tenses, seven grammatical builds, single-plural, etc.
- We also use the Rashi Grammar-Prepositional Rule
  - This rule states that verb meaning depends on the connective used

## GRAMMAR –PREPOSITION RULE

- The following beautiful example comes from Malbim, Lev. 1:1
  - Verb Karah, Preposition eth = called him
  - Verb karah, Preposition to = called to = to page
  - Verb Karah, preposition for = called for = to invite

## Application of Rashi Rule to Ex09-33

- The verb in the verse **Nun-Tauv-Caph** means to **cast** or **mold**
- This verb occurs with several prepositions with the following meanings
  - Cast **in**, Mold **in** – indicates casting the metal **in a mold** to achieve a desired shape
  - Cast **on** - Probably indicates **chilling** objects in the mold – these objects enable the solidification process to become harder
  - Cast **to** – This refers to pouring the molten metal in **conduits** to go to the mold to be solidified and shaped

## Application of Rashi Rule to Ex09-33-Continued

- Let us look at examples of each of these used metaphorically
  - Cast **in**, Mold **in** – **My anger will be cast in this place** – this metaphor sees Gods anger as molten and as solidifying and hardening in a place
  - Cast **on** - **My anger will be cast on the inhabitants of Jerusalem** – this metaphor sees the Jerusalemites as chilling objects in the cauldron on which God's anger is poured and solidified thus making the final anger-product hard and strong
  - Cast **to** – The combination of **Cast** and **to** occurs rarely and is why Rashi commented on **Ex09-33**. The combination refers to pouring molten metal in **conduits** leading to the mold to be formed. This will be examined on the next slide



# Application of Rashi Rule to Ex09-33-Finalized

- What does **Mold/Cast rain** mean?
  - It metaphorically views the **rain as molten** liquid
  - Which when arriving in the **mold/cast of the earth**
  - Becomes **solidified** into something new
  - We have captured this metaphor of **casting rain** as **rain saturating the earth**
- What then does mold/cast **to** mean?
  - This sees the rain as molten metal **travelling along a path** to its mold
  - But as is known in the molten world, a molten metal may not make it through
  - Sometimes objects must be mixed with the metal to give viscosity
  - Sometimes pressure must be used to move along the conduit
- Hence the Rashi echoing the midrash
  - The rain did not **mold to** earth – the little rain /moisture there was **evaporated** to earth on its way to **saturate**
  - Taken together the verse speaks about an **arid** condition without moisture

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- I mentioned that the verse means that the rain evaporated mid-air and did not get to earth
- This is a midrash that even rain midair stopped as a result of Moses' prayer
  - Some people look at this midrash as a silly exaggeration of miracles
  - Or they look at this midrash as based on the incorrect root Tauv-Caph=middle
  - So it would mean the rain stopped mid air
- Not so. The Rashi is based on sound grammar
  - It is based on the preposition to: Casting to / Molding to
  - Anyone familiar with molding/casting knows that one part of the process
  - Is conduiting the molten metal
  - Rashi following the Midrash picturesquely describes the rain as travelling down conduits to earth but not making it because of how arid air became.

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- I now quote from Henry Englander who examined Rashi's use of verbs
- Here is some background
- Rashi used the latest dictionary available: Menahem's dictionary
  - This dictionary did not define words
  - Rather under each root it listed divisions
  - Each division simply listed verses which Menahem thought were similar
- Menahem was a great grammarian but he believed in 2-letter roots
- He did not know of Roots with Weak letters
  - Hence the verb to mold/cast **Nun-Tauv-Caph** was not used
  - He classified verses with mold/cast under **Tauv-Caph**
- Later Hebrew grammarians believed in 3-letter roots
- Today all scholars believe in 3 letter roots
- But some letters are weak.
- The problem? Since Rashi cited Menahem maybe he believed in 2-letter roots
- Not so!!!

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- Englander gives the following argument to criticize Rashi
  - Rashi says that Menahem classifies this verb in Ex 9:33 under the division
  - With words meaning molding
  - Englander says: Rashi believes the meaning is the rain casts (saturates) earth
- Englander continues
  - By agreeing with Menahem without disagreeing on the classification
  - Rashi agrees the root is Tuv Caph proving he did not believe in 3 letter roots
- How do we answer Englander?
- First Englander totally ignores the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue in Rashi: cast to / mold to
- Second: Englander himself notes that Rashi's disagreements with Menahem
  - Focus on meaning-classification not on grammar
  - In other words Rashi's purpose here was not to teach grammar but rather
  - That the underlying root meaning is cast and the preposition means cast to
  - So his agreement is solely on meaning not on grammar.