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Ex16-03c

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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 Ex16-03

- [This verse was stated by Pharoh when the Jews fled Egypt]
- Pharoh will then say concerning Israel
- They are bewildered/aghast in the land
- The desert has closed them in

Rashi Text:

- bewildered/Aghast: Imprisoned and stuck like
- Ps 84:7 Walking in the valley of aghastment (hell)
 - Job38-16 Can you come to the sea whirlpools
 - They are imprisoned in the desert
 - They don't know how to get out
 - Nor where to go

Supplementary Material

- *This Rashi will give us an opportunity to understand Rashi's approach to Grammar*
- *Modern scholars see Rashi as ignorant of the modern 3-letter root approach*
- *We shall see that Rashi had different goals: Meaning versus Grammar*
- *This will enable us to understand and appreciate Rashi better*

RASHI RULES USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- We use the Rashi Grammar Rule
 - Words have roots
 - Roots in turn have meanings
 - Contrary to what some modern scholars say:
 - Very often roots with two similar letters can have similar meanings
 - Although they
 - ❖ Differ in conjugation
 - ❖ They can resemble each other in meaning
 - Experiment: If you take any dictionary of Hebrew roots and
 - ❖ Randomly select several roots with the same 2 non weak letters
 - ❖ You will find that about 40% of them have overlapping meaning
 - Modern Grammarians such as Gesenius have confirmed this

GRAMMAR RULE

- The following are some simple examples of 2 roots with 2 common letters
 - The roots have different conjugations
 - The roots have similar meaning
- Yud-lamed-caph and Hey lamed caph (to walk)
- Aleph-Lamed-Lamed (woe) and Aleph-Lamed-Hey (cursed)
- Zayin-Vav-Ayin (shaken/trembling) and Zayin-Ayin-Hey (shaken/trembling)
- Daleth-Vav-Caph, Daleth-Caph-Hey and Daleth-Caph-Aleph (abused, pushed over)
- Daleth-Vav-Mem and Daleth-Mem-Mem (silence)
- Daleth-Gimel-Hey (fish) and Daleth-Vav-Gimel (fishermen)
- Zayin-Yud-Kuph (spark) and Zayin-Nun-Kuph (flash jump or sudden jump)
 - This example might more illustrate synecdoche (sparks are good examples of sudden jumps; if so, the semantic scope of the two roots is still similar)
- Daleth-Vav-Caph (pushed over) and Daleth-Caph-Hey (pushed over)
 - In this case: Daleth-Vav-Caph also means to clean
 - Our point is not that the 2 roots are always identical
 - But that they have overlapping common meaning

Application of Rashi Rule to Ex16-03

- Rashi cites three verses (we only cited two) with different roots
 - Beth-Caph-Aleph (intense crying/hell)
 - Nun-Beth-Caph (whirlpool/total bewilderment)
- We can add to this list
 - Beth-Vav-Caph means confused
 - But Beth-Vav-Caph would require the pronunciation NaVochim
 - Instead it says NeVuchim suggesting a root Nun-Beth-Caph
- The reason modern scholars did not pick this up is because
 - Nun-Beth-Caph occurs at most one more time in Job 38:16
 - So they prefer to see our text as corrupt
 - Nebuchim really means NaVochim
 - But Rashi accepted the rare root Nun-Beth-Caph

Application of Rashi Rule to Ex09-33-Continued

- Let us examine the meaning of Nun-Beth-Caph
- Job38:16 asks: Can you come to the Nun-Beth-Caph of the sea
 - The idea of confusion is not sufficient here
 - It seems to indicate total confusion such as a whirlpool
- Ex33-03 says: The Jews were Nun-Beth-Caph in the land
 - The idea of confusion is not sufficient here
 - It seem to indicate total confusion and even fright
 - Now we understand Rashi's language
 - ❖ Imprisoned and stuck
 - ❖ They didn't know how to get out
 - ❖ Nor where to go if they did get out
 - We have translated this as aghast or bewildered

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Let us first discuss modern scholars
 - They look at the world 1st through grammar and then through meaning
 - They look for precedents instead of rare occurrences
 - They think the root in Ex16-03 is Beth-Vav-Caph
 - They translate the verse dryly: They were confused in the land
 - They don't mind seeing Nevuchim as a corruption of Navochim
 - Notice how they impose their views on the Bible and therefore
 - Have to correct the text
- Rashi is different
 - He accepts the text as is: It says Nevuchim not NaVoChim
 - This suggests the root Nun-Beth-Caph
 - There is only one other verse in Job with Nun-Beth-Caph
 - ❖ Have you come to the Nun-Beth-Caph of the sea (whirlpools)
 - ❖ The idea is one of total bewilderment and being trapped
 - Hence he paints a colorful (not dry) picture of Ex16-03
 - ❖ The Jews were not confused they were Nebuch: aghast, bewildered
 - ❖ Perhaps the phrase totally helpless: Cant get out and no place to go

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Thus you see that
 - In terms of meaning, Rashi is deeper (total bewilderment) than
 - Modern scholars who are superficial (confused)
- But you can ask: What about the root?
 - Doesn't Rashi cite a root with an aleph and a root with a Nun
 - Doesn't that show that Rashi believed in two letter roots?
- Not necessarily so!
 - Recall that even modern scholars acknowledge that
 - Similar roots have similar meaning but dissimilar conjugations
 - Rashi
 - ❖ Was not superficial – not interested in 'how to conjugate'
 - ❖ Was deep: meaning first grammar second
 - ❖ Rashi asked: What is the proper picture to paint of the Jews
- Finally later verses in this section showed how helpless the Jews felt
 - Indeed they wanted to return to Egypt
- This shows Rashi as sensitive to the Biblical poetry and nuances.