

ParShaT *VaYayTzaY*– One Pager Series

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Rashi #1: Biblical Text Gn38-11a Jacob left Beer Sheva and journeyed towards Charan. But he BUMPED into the place, so he camped over there because the sun was setting: He took from the stones of the place and placed them around his head.

Rashiyomi explanation #1: The Place: The article the sounds wrong; it should be a place. Also notice how the noun is repeated twice (instead of using a pronoun: e.g. “he took from *its* stones”). The *peshat*, the instant spontaneous response to this statement, *the place*, is the *known place*. We are not told which *known place* but it stands to reason that Jacob in journeying from the South of Israel, from Beer Sheva, northward to Charan, bumped into Jerusalem, which at that time was Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham had his famous dreams of sacrificing Isaac. It was a holy place and like all holy places is referred to as *The Place*

Rashi text #1: In English we have a well-developed grammar and can speak about the special type of adjective called an article, words like *the*, *a*. Contrastively, Rashi in his time had a limited vocabulary to talk about grammar. Instead of saying succinctly *the article the points to a known place* he has to clumsily say *The text does not tell us which place* [translation: The place is unspecified and should be called a]; *so the text must refer to the place mentioned elsewhere as it says in Gn21:02 go to the place which I (God) will show you.* [translation: Holy places are considered *known* and are always referred to with the article the]

Rashi #2: Biblical Text Gn38-11b: See the all-capped word in Rashi #1.

Rashi text #2: A) The word *bumped* can mean *meet* as found in the description of Israeli borders in Joshua 16 (e.g. and the boundary bumps [translation: *meets*] Jericho and then... B) And our Rabbis explain *bump* to refer to Prayer as in e.g. Jer. 7:16 C) And they learned that Jacob enacted the evening prayers. D) And the reason the Bible uses *bump* instead of *pray* is because the road shrunk for Jacob.

Rashiyomi explanation #2: The Green color, B: This is neither *peshat* nor *derash*, it is *fill-in*. It is simply natural to pray at the sight of power and majesty. Examples: 1) When an American president visited the concentration camps he exclaimed, “Let me pause here for a while;” 2) When a Jesuit priest first saw Niagara falls he got on his knees and expressed his feeling to God; 3) When an Israeli Rockstar heard an explosion 100 meters from his studio he wrote a hit song, “We can only cry out to God.”. Rashi is *filling in* what probably happened when Jacob arrived at a holy place. Pink color D: *Bump* in English can refer to a sudden physical meeting; but it can also refer to an emotional reaction: Have you ever been preoccupied and all of a sudden you realize several hours have past. So too, Jacob was upset about his brother trying to kill him and all of a sudden he realized several hours had passed and the sun was setting. The word *bump* refers to the feeling of suddenness not to the actual shrinking of the road. The red color, C: Having established the *fill-in*, Rashi engages in exhortational insights. We understand the *morning prayer*, the prayer to ask God to help me in the tasks that I must do that day; we understand the *afternoon* prayer when I express appreciation to God on the accomplishments He has helped me with; but an evening prayer, when I state I am confused and complain? This was not yet established. The Patriarch Jacob worried about an attempted murder and banished from his house, introduced prayer in confusion and complaint. The green color, B: The translation of the Biblical *paga* as *prayer* does not fit in here. Rashi is simply making a pun on another meaning of the word. Thus we classify the green as Rashi form. It is neither *peshat* nor *derash* it is a clever form to help you remember.