

**Rashi #1: Biblical Text: Nu05, 06:** Biblical Chapter Nu05 describes the suspected-adulteress ceremony while Biblical Chapter Nu06 describes the Nazarite, the person who vows to abstain from drinking wine.

**Rashi Text:** Why is the chapter on the Nazarite, consecutive, right after the chapter on the suspected-adulteress? Because whoever sees the suspected adulteress ceremony (which disgraces her in order to get her to confess if she sinned) is likely to abstain from wine.

**Is this *peshat*?** There are several points to make: 1) The Rashi comment is certainly *reasonable* (seeing a woman disgraced and suspected could easily lead to a vow to abstain from wine); 2) The Rashi comment follows from the Grammatical exegetical pillar which teaches that *consecutiveness* in sentences or paragraphs may indicate *causation*; 3) although the connection is reasonable, you *can't prove it*.

Despite the above, the real, and in fact only, issue is whether this is *peshat*, the *spontaneous and instant* reaction of a native speaker to the text. We immediately see two possible outcomes

***Peshat to Whom?*** Consider a typical middle-class American Jew. Perhaps you have never seen a case of adultery. You read the chapters about the suspected-adulteress ceremony (who violated both Jewish law and her husband's wishes by secluding herself with the person she is suspected) and then hear right after that the Nazarite chapter. Based on this person's experience, there is no reason to connect the two chapters as cause and effect. This person would certainly not have the following spontaneous reaction, "Of course! The person saw the suspected adulteress ceremony and vowed to abstain from wine." In other words, this Rashi comment would not be *peshat* (spontaneous and instant) to *this* person.

Contrastively, let us now consider a typical Rabbi. Like all Rabbis this person may be involved in marital counseling and may have even overseen several divorces. He may have even seen a few adulteries which led to divorce, though that is not the only reason, or even the typical reason, for getting a divorce. Among the few adulteries this Rabbi has seen he may have seen overreaction on the part of close friends of the adulteress. They may have become withdrawn; maybe they skipped a few banquets. As a Rabbi he may have tried to counsel these people that they are overreacting and get them back involved. This Rabbi, when he hears the suspected adulteress chapter followed immediately by the Nazarite chapter, may indeed spontaneously think of the cases he has dealt with and view the two consecutive chapters as naturally indicating possible causality. In other words, to this Rabbi, the Rashi comment and insight is *peshat*, spontaneous.

**So, what is the Final Conclusion?** The final conclusion is that this Rashi comment is indeed *peshat*. Why? The position of this Rashi series, as justified by Rashi's explicit language on Gn03-08, is that a *peshat* comment consists of "words that naturally flow and roll," which we have interpreted to mean are a spontaneous and instant reaction to the text. As we have explained many times, *peshat* is simply about *instantness*; it is not about reasonableness, proof, or even truth (though of course it correlates with them). The sole test of *peshat* is whether it is an instant reaction to a text. But the Rashi comment studied today has clarified *to whom* it is instant: It is instant to a native speaker who deals with the *experiences* described by the biblical text. Some Rashis of course are *instant* to everyone who speaks Hebrew; Rashi comments like this one are instant to those *in the field*.