

The RashiYomi NewsLetter

Non-Essay Week Series

Quicky Series

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NOTE: The RashiYomi Website, www.RashiYomi.com is engaged in a multi-decade project to explain all Rashi comments on Chumash, as peshat, the straightforward reading of the text by a literate speaker. Towards this end the Rashi website publishes the journal, Essays, providing a paper and essay every other week on a particular Rashi theme. In between the Essay weeks we will publish abridged versions of Quickies Rashi comments that can be explained quickly with a few sentences. For reasons of space, these quickies are abridged but the full version can be found in the updated website every other week.

VERSE_ID	RASHI PEDAGOGIC CATEGORY RASHI RULE	BRIEF EXPLANATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	SIMILAR RASHIS
Gn19-01a	PARALLELISM CONTRADICTION	Gn18-02 and Gn19-01 both refer to the same entities: In Gn19-01 they are called ANGELS while in Gn18-02 they are called PEOPLE. Rashi gives several explanations but the bottom line is that Abraham was used to speaking to Angels, to him they were just other PEOPLE; contrastively, LOT very rarely saw ANGELS, so him they are called ANGELS.		
Gn18-33b	PARAGRAPH THEME	The paragraph theme is the dialogue between GOD and ABRAHAM on whether SEDOM and AMORAH should be totally destroyed. The verse in question SUMMARIZES the aftermath of the dialogue: After both parties, God and Abraham were satisfied, GOD and ABRAHAM respectively return to their respective tasks.		Gn18-33a Gn18-33b
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Gn18-23a	MEANING SYNECOCHE	The Hebrew root Nun-Gimel-Shin means to APPROACH, to come physically near. The SYNECDOCHE figure of speech will name new situations based on frequent or best examples for example calling anything SWEET, HONEY. Rashi cites several verses each with distinct situations where to APPROACH means to BRING UP A SUBJECT or SITUATION. This idiom also exists in English as in WE APPROACHED TO PRAY.		
Gn18-22b	GRAMMAR ETIQUETTE	Gn18-01 continued in Gn18-03 says that God appeared to Abraham and was STANDING BEFORE HIM (while Abraham tended to the guests); But Gn18-22b says "Abraham was STANDING before God". Rashi explains that the reversal of the roles of God and Abraham (who stood before who) is done for reasons of etiquette. Rashi in fact sites the Talmud which gathered 18 such examples of ETIQUETTE throughout the Bible.		
Gn18-22a	GRAMMAR PRONOUNS	The verse that the guests "Went from THERE". THERE is a PRONOUN and Rashi explains that it references Gn18-16 "Abraham escorted the guests when they left" . So, "Went from THERE" refers to the place that Abraham escorted them.		
Gn18-21a	PARAGRAPH THEME	Rashi gives separate comments on BOTH words in the verse "Let Us GO DOWN and let us SEE" Rashi explains that since God judged Sodom and Amorah as worthy of DESTRUCTION it is a judicial process and therefore requires DIRECT EVIDENCE (not reasonable evidence) as indicated by SEE and also requires JUDICIAL DELIBERATION to see if there are alternate explanations and motivations for the behavior, as indicated by LET US DESCEND (that is, DESCEND for a JUDICIAL review)		
Gn18-20b	GRAMMAR TENSE	Rashi explains that two words with the same letters and vowels can differ in meaning by their accent. Here, Rashi explains that rab-BAH is translated as BIG while RAB-bah is translated as ALREADY IS BIG.		

Gn18-19b	GRAMMAR HABITUAL	The HABITUAL refers to an ONGOING PERIODICALLY done activity not confined to past, present, or future. Thus, the word GO in "I GO to Synagogue on Saturdays" indicates not something done in the past or future or even present but an ongoing habit of mine. Biblical Hebrew indicates the HABITUAL with the FUTURE or PAST conjugation (the HABITUAL nature called the DURATIVE is inferred by meaning not by form). Because the FUTURE conjugation can indicate both FUTURE and HABITUAL Rashi clarifies here that it means the Habitual.		
Gn18-17a	GRAMMAR INTERROGATIVE	The prefix HEY with a PATACH vowel (HA) can mean either (i) "the" or (ii) indicate the interrogative. Because of the ambiguity Rashi clarifies here that the interrogative is indicated		
Gn18-16a	MEANING SYNONYM	Rashi does not translate the biblical Hebrew to English but an English translation would help. SHIN-KAPH-HEY means to STARE and is a SYNONYM or HYPONYM of VIEWING. STARE indicates INTENT VIEWING; it is usually RUDE and INAPPROPRIATE; Rashi points out that at Dt26-15 "STARE from YOUR Heavens and bless us" it is POSITIVE and APPROPRIATE. The real heart of the Rashi comment is nuance of STARE as INTENSE viewing which can be captured neatly in English.		
Gn18-14b	MEANING ARTICLES	The verse speaks about THE DATE. Rashi explains the reference of "THE" It refers to the time of Sarah's birth just indicated to Abraham spoken about in Gn17-21, and Gn18-10. Gn17-21 (not cited by Rashi) explicitly uses the word DATE (in the sense of appointment)		
Gn18-14a	MEANING SYNONYMS	Rashi explains that the Hebrew PELEH which typically means BEYOND here refers to ABILITY to do. This is identical to the English Idiom: IT IS NOT BEYOND YOU that it YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO IT. The verse IS THIS BEYOND GOD? Means CAN GOD NOT DO THIS?		

Gn18-13b	MEANING SYNONYMS	Above Sarah says to herself "After I have WITHERED, I will have a child" while when God cites her, He changes WITHER to ELDER: "After I have ELDERED I will have a child?" Both WITHER and ELDER denote old age but WITHER denotes DECLINE while ELDER connotes MATURITY. Rashi points out that God changed the citation for reasons of etiquette.	I believe the current Rashi text which contrasts Sarah saying "My husband is OLD" with God's citation "I am old" is a corruption put in by a well-meaning printer. The truth is that BOTH Abraham and Sarah were old; having a child was improbable. The change I suggest WITHER to ELDER is consistent with adjusting a text for etiquette.	
Gn18-12a	GRAMMAR IDIOM	Rashi explains that a PREFIX BETH which normally means IN can also mean ON. Thus, the verses IN HER INWARDS means ON HER INWARDS and is an IDIOM referring to her body (e.g. "will these breasts nurse")		
Gn18-11b	MEANING IDIOM	The Hebrew XHA-DAL refers to the stopping of a process. Rashi explains SARAH STOPPED HAVING THE PATH OF WOMEN to refer to the cessation of menstruation		Gn18-11a Gn18-11b
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Gn18-10c	PARAGRAPH DIAGRAM	Rashi will frequently provide a VERBAL DIAGRAM of something described in the biblical narrative. Today we have pictures in text but no so in Rashi's time. Here Rashi explains that (i) Sarah was in the tent (ii) Abraham was on the other side of the tent door, (iii) The 3 guests were opposite Abraham. This fits into the theme of Gn18-09b that Sarah was modest and didn't want to appear before strangers; besides being inside the tent Abraham shielded the door as an affirmation that she did not want to be seen.		
Gn18-10b	MEANING IDIOM	Rashi explains that ka-eth cha-yah literally at this time alive is an idiom meaning at this time. The "alive" is added as a politeness "at this time, may we all be still alive"		
Gn18-10a	GRAMMAR PERSON	Rashi explains that the I in I WILL RETURN when send by a messenger or agent does not refer to that agent but to the boss (who might send another agent)		

Gn18-08c	MEANING SYNONYMS	Both A-Sah and TiQ-Qen mean to fix up. Rashi explains that A-sah is more appropriate when the fixing up is done bit by bit (Another example of using A-Sah vs. TiQ-Qen, not brought by Rashi, is "fixing up nails" which is indicated in Hebrew with A-Sah.		
Gn18-08b	MEANING MEANING	Rashi explains that the Hebrew Xem-Ah means cream		
Gn18-02b	GRAMMAR PRONOUNS	Pronouns frequently interchange in Hebrew (each pronoun despite its primary meaning can take on multiple meanings). Here the word "on him" means "before him" (The Angels stood before him). Rashi cites other examples of "on" = "before" and explains it is a more discrete form to say "before" vs. "on".		
Gn18-02a	GRAMMAR PLURALITY	From the shifting pluralities about the 3 angels - some verses use "they" while some verses use "he" - Rashi infers that the 3 angels came for the 3 separate tasks mentioned here - 1) saving Lot/ curing Abraham 2) Destroying Sodom 3) Telling Sarah she would give birth -- as by each individual task "he" not "they" is mentioned. Rashi also infers that "Saving lot" and "Curing Abraham from the circumcision" was one task (of "saving" with two applications, to Lot and Abraham) and infers that each Angel specializes in one task		
Gn18-01b	PARAGRAPH PARAGRAPH	Rashi connects the place God appeared to Abraham with the surrounding paragraphs. Gn14-13 indicated that Abraham resided in the plains of Mamre with brothers Aner and Eshkol and further explains that Abraham and them made a treaty (to live in peace). Abraham lived there and the intervening paragraphs such as his marriage to Hagar and Gods revelation about the circumcision were there as was this Appearance. Rashi emphasizes all Appearances were there and presumably Abraham received support for these decisions (e.g. to circumcise at 99) from them		