

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Parshat VaYiQRaH - TzaV

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GOALS

The goal of the Weekly Rashi Digest is to use the weekly Torah portion to expose students at all levels to the ten major methods of Rashi's commentary. Continual weekly exposure to these ten major methods facilitate the acquisition, familiarity, and facility with the major exegetical methods. This year, 2012-2013, we are concentrating on the **grammar** rule. We acknowledge benefitting from Dr. Isseroff's book, *An Introduction to Rashi's Grammatical Explanations in the Book of Genesis*, 1985, Published by the Torah Education Department of World Zionist Organization, MP Press Inc, ISBN 965-222-049-3. For a full lightning statement of all Rashi rules see the Appendix.

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One Character Suffixes *Daily Rashi Sunday Mar 17 2013*

In our weekly Rashi on *Bereishith* we saw that the addition of one character at the end of a sentence changes the meaning of that sentence from a statement to a question. Here is an example.

- "You walked to the store in the rain."
- "You walked to the store in the rain?"

A very important exegetical point is being made here: *Skeptics tend to ridicule inference of meaning from one letter or character as being far fetched and*

homiletic. But we see in the just-mentioned English example that certain rules of grammar naturally motivate meaning differences based on one-character. The important issue therefore, is not how many characters drive the exegesis but rather the grammaticity of the inference.

Several other examples of grammatical change in meaning based on one character were also presented in the *Bereishith* digest:

- The difference between a proper and improper noun is indicated in English by the word *the*, but is indicated in Hebrew by the prefix letter *hey*.
- The difference between plural and singular in both English and Hebrew is indicated by a one character suffix, *s*, in English (in Hebrew it is indicated by a two-character suffix).

Today we study a special idiomatic usage of one character prefixes.

Example Lv04-01

Biblical text: *Speak to the Jewish people to say over: When a soul sins*

- *from any of God's negative commandments accidentally and does*
 - *from one from these*
- ...Then...the person brings a sin offering*

Rashi: In biblical Hebrew the English word from is indicated by a prefix *mem*. The prefix *mem* can be translated as from or of. The following usages of *mem* have the following meanings:

- *Do these* - would mean that the prerequisite for bringing a sin offering is violation of all negative commandments
- *Do one of these* - would mean that the prerequisite for bringing a sin offering is violation of any one negative commandment

Do from one from these - would mean that the prerequisite for bringing a sin offering is violation of even a part of one of the negative commandments (that meets the required quantity).

One Character Suffixes *Daily Rashi Monday Mar 18 2013*

Lv01-06

Biblical text: *And he shall flay the sacrifices and cut [only] it to its pieces.*

There are two ways, in biblical Hebrew, to indicate the underlined pronoun, it:

- By using a one character suffix, *vav* [*Venitecho*]

- By using a Hebrew word *otho*.

Most commentators see these two approaches to naming *it* as identical in meaning. The great Malbim explains the Rashi and Sifrah by translating

- the one character suffix, *vav*, as meaning it
- the word *otho*, as meaning only it or exclusively it.

Rashi following the Sifrah further explains the implications of *cut only it* to its pieces

- *cut to pieces* would include cutting it up and then cutting the cuts and continuing to cut and cut
- *cut only it to pieces* means that only the original item was cut; but one doesn't further cut the cuts.

This principle occurs many times in Leviticus. As we go through the yearly cycle we will see many more examples of this principle

Plural vs. Singular *Daily Rashi Tuesday Mar 19 2013*

All languages have the capacity to indicate plurality - many vs one:

- In English, the plural is indicated by a terminal *s*: For example, *apples*, would indicate many apples.
- In Hebrew, the plural can be indicated by a terminal *mem*, or in the case of the Hebrew construct, by a terminal *yud*.

Many Rashis and exegetical inferences on plurals are straightforward, punchy and clear.

Example: Lv05-24

Background: A person who denies under oath monies owed because of theft, loans, lost articles, deposits, etc must reimburse the original amount and a fifth more (as fine).

Biblical text: *And he shall pay the principle and add its fifths.*

Rashi: The plural fifths indicates possibly multiple fifths as could happen if the person denies under oath owing money and then,

- after incurring a fine of a fifth,

- denies under oath owing the money and fifth.
- In such a case the person would be liable to the original principle,
- liable for the original fifth, and
- a new fifth of the previous fifth.

Hence the bible uses the plural fifths to indicate the possibility of multiple fifths.

Connective words - *Kol* - all, every, each (part), whole ***Daily Rashi Wednesday Mar 20 2013***

Every language has connective words which can connect two sentences or connect nouns with the adjectival phrases modifying them. Some common examples of connective words in English are *because, and, or, if-then, from, when,*

A beautiful discovery by Rashi, following the researchers of the Midrash, is that in biblical Hebrew, each connective word has multiple meanings, sometimes as many as half a dozen meanings. The most famous example points out that the biblical Hebrew word *ki*, can have any of the following six meanings! *rather, perhaps, because, when, if-then, that*. As several Rashi researchers have pointed out, this principle of multiple meanings applies not only to *ki*, but generally applies to all connective words and prefixes.

So biblical Hebrew is unlike English:

- English is user friendly; the speaker explicitly by choice of words tells the listener exactly what the speaker intends to say
- Contrastively, in Hebrew, the speaker and listener share the discovery of meaning: The speaker says something, but the listener has a choice of meanings.

Perhaps the reason for biblical Hebrew in doing this is that by the listener participating with the speaker in identifying meaning the listening experience is intensified, facilitating retention of communication.

Today we study the biblical Hebrew connective word, *Caph-lamed*. It can mean

- *All, without exception*
- *Each part, whole*
- *Each group*

As we go through the yearly cycle we will see examples of each of these meanings, thus sharpening the students eye to various nuances of the connective.

Example from this week's parshah.

Example 2: Lv06-11

Background: The paragraph discusses the offering and consumption of the priestly minchah offering.

Biblical text: *All male priests may eat it..*

Rashi: *All male priests*, even blemished priests: although they may not offer the offerings they may nevertheless participate in eating it.

Example 1: Ex20-15 [The following verse describes the prophetic revelation at Sinai where the nation received the Torah] *And the entire nation, without exception, saw the prophetic visions of voice and lightning and the voice of the ram's horn...*

Rashi: The Hebrew word *Kaph-Lamed*, means all, without exception. There were no exceptions among the Jewish people who did not have a prophetic experience. Even the slaves and bondmaids among them saw the prophetic visions.

Repetition Daily Rashi Thursday Mar 21 2013

Repetition is a fundamental exegetical method with diverse meanings. Repetition can legitimately be interpreted both restrictively and broadly. Repetition is a literary technique used in all languages. Repetition can be used to indicate

- emphasis
- necessity
- all-inclusiveness of other cases

and many more. As we go through the yearly cycle we shall have opportunity to examine many diverse usages of repetition. A good reference on uses of repetition in biblical exegesis is found below.

Example from this week's parshah.

Example 2: Lv01-05e

Biblical text: *He slaughters the ox before God; and the priests bring near the blood and throw the blood around the altar*

Rashi interprets the repeated underlined word blood. Prior to explaining the Rashi

we should point out that Malbim explains that a pronoun would suffice instead of the repetition. For example, the verse could have said *He slaughters the ox before God; and the priests bring near the blood and throw it around the altar*. We therefore can refer to this (and similar) examples as the *repetition-pronoun* rule.

Rashi interprets the resulting repetition expansively. *He slaughters the ox before God; and the priests bring near*

- *the blood* [of the slaughtered ox] *and*
- *throws the blood* [any blood, whether the blood of the ox or some other sacrifice] *around the altar*

In other words, the repetition expands the meaning to refer to any blood whether from this animal or another. This pronoun-repetition principle is followed throughout the Bible and we shall see many examples of it later on. As we explore many more examples the reader will become more comfortable with it.

Example 1: Ex38-21

Biblical text: These are the audits of the Temple, the Temple of the 10 Commandments, which was audited by Moses, the craftsmanship of the Levites under the supervision of Ithamar, son of Aaron the (High) Priest.

Rashi interprets the repetition, indicated by the underlines, expansively:

These are the audits of

- *the Temple*, [Rashi: Any Temple, whether the Wilderness temple or future Temples to be built, such as the Solomonic Temple]
- *the Temple of the 10 Commandments*, - [Rashi: The Wilderness temple which had the 10 commandments]

which was audited by Moses, the craftsmanship of the Levites under the supervision of Ithamar, son of Aaron the (High) Priest.

A punchier way to understand Rashi's comment on the phrase *the Temple, the Temple of the 10 commandments* is any Temple. In other words, the repetition connotes an expansive translation including any Temple.

References

Russell Jay Hendel, **Biblical Formatting**, *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 35#1,17 - 27:

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHI RULES

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I-REFERENCE: Dt26-05d *We went down to Egypt with a few people* explained by Gn46-27: with 70 people

II-MEANING / Lexicography / Dictionary: **EXAMPLE (Connectives)** KI means IF,PERHAPS,RATHER,BECAUSE,WHEN,THAT (Rashi on Gn18-15a Gn24-33a) **EXAMPLE (Nuances):** YDA means FAMILIAR, not KNOW (eg Dt34-10a) eg Gn04-01 Adam was FAMILIAR with his wife **EXAMPLE (Idioms)** ON THE FACE OF means DURING THE LIFETIME (Rashi on Nu03-04a Gn11-28a Ex20-03c Dt05-07a) **EXAMPLE (Synonyms)** *Marchesheth* means pot; *Machavath* means frying pan (Lv02-05a, 07a) **EXAMPLE (Honyms)** SHAMAH can mean listen, hear, understand: (Gn42-23a) *They didn't appreciate that Joseph understood them* (Note: They knew he was listening) **EXAMPLE (Metonymy)** (Lv02-11a) *Don't offer ...any honey as sacrifices* RASHI: honey includes any sweet fruit juice

III-GRAMMAR: **EXAMPLE:** BA-ah means CAME;ba-AH means COMING(Gn46-26a)

EXAMPLE: Hitpael conjugation has different rules if 1st root letter is Tzade (Gn44-16a)

IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited

V-CONTRADICTION: (Nu04-03, Nu08-24a)Levites start Temple work at 25; Levites start temple work at 30. RASHI: They apprentice at 25 but start actual service at 30.

VI-STYLE: RABBI ISHMAEL RULES: EXAMPLE: (Simple verses should be generalized): (Rashi Pesachim 6) (Dt25-04a) *Dont MUZZLE an OX while THRESHING* RASHI: Dont STOP any WORKING ANIMAL from eating

VII-FORMATTING: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition): Ex12-09c) COOK COOK it in water (So COOKED-COOKED is understood the same way bold is understood by modern reader) RASHI: Preferred to COOK it in water; But COOK it at all costs(Even if you dont have water) **EXAMPLE: (BULLETS indicated by Repeating keywords)** (Ex03-11a) Who am I - **THAT** I should go to Pharaoh - **THAT** I should take the Jews out of Egypt RASHI: Repeated word **THAT** creates BULLET effect - Pharaoh was a difficult king (Bullet one) - Jews were not yet ready for freedom (Bullet two) **EXAMPLE (Climax assumed in any Biblical list):** (Dt19-11a) *If a man HATES, SPIES, CONFRONTS & KILLS.* RASHI: Bible identifies 4 stages to murder(indicated by capped words

VIII-DATABASE: EXAMPLE: *God spoke to Moses to say over* introduces about 7 dozen biblical commandments; *God spoke to Aaron to say over* only introduces 2 commandments. RASHI: (Lv10-03b) Aaron was silent when his sons died because they served in the Temple drunk; hence he merited that the commandment prohibiting priests to work in the Temple drunk, was given to him

IX-NON VERSE: EXAMPLE: (Use of Algebra)(Ex38-26b) *Temple donations of silver were 100 Kikar and 1775 Shekel from 630,550 half-shekels* RASHI: So one Kikar of silver = 3000 Shekel.

X: SYMBOLISM; EXAMPLE: (Use of puns) (NuXX-XX) Moses made a copper snake for people to look up to when bitten by snakes (so they should pray and recover) RASHI: (Nu21-09a) The Hebrew root for copper and snake are identical (Cf. The English *copperhead*) Moses made the metal snake copper colored to symbolize the snake