

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Parshat Shemini-Tazria-Metzorah

Vol 20#1 - Adapted from **Rashi-is-Simple**

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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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Connective words - *Interchangability of connective words* ***Daily Rashi - Sunday April 7, 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.

A consequence of this principle is that connective words do not necessarily have one meaning. In fact, the same prepositional connective can have opposite meanings - like to and from.

Examples from this week's Parshah:

Example 1: Lv14-25d

Background: The Bible is summarizing the laws of the past few chapters.

Biblical text: *This is the biblical law for all leprosy...to teach **when** is the day of impurity and **when** is the day of purity.*

Rashi: The Hebrew prefix, **beth**, normally translated *on* here means *when*.

REFERENCES

The following are some references on the interchangeability of specific connectives. There are many more

Esra Shereshevsky, *The Use of Prepositions and Conjunctions in Rashi's Commentary*, **The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series**, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Jan., 1967), pp. 200-211

Nahum M. Sarna, *The Interchange of the Prepositions Beth and Min in Biblical Hebrew*, **Journal of Biblical Literature**, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Dec., 1959), pp. 310-316

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Examples from this week's Parshah:

Example 4: Lv15-25d

Biblical text: *If a woman*

- has a bloody discharge many days not during the time of her menstruation o

*- if she discharges **right after** her menstruation;*

all the days of the discharge of her impurity shall be as the days of her menstruation; she shall be ritually impure.

Rashi: The Hebrew word **ayin-lamed, al**, normally meaning spatially *on*, here means temporarily *after*.

Example 5: Lv14-05a

Biblical text: *And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen utensil after the running water [is placed in the vessel];*

Rashi: The Hebrew word **ayin-lamed, al**, normally meaning spatially *on*, here means temporarily *after*.

Example 1:

Ex28-22a, discussing how the Choshen priestly garment was attached to the Eyfod priestly garment, states *And you shall make for the breastplate, chains, twisted like cords, of pure gold, at the end.*

Rashi: The Hebrew word used, *al*, normally means *on*. However, it means *for* (*for the purpose*).

As we go through the yearly cycle we will have occasion to study uses of *al*.

Example 2: Ex35-22

This verse discusses how the Jewish people donated generously for the building of the Temple. The verse describes how both men and women made contributions.

Biblical text: *The men came with the women; every generous hearted person brought bracelets and earrings and rings and buckles, all kinds of golden objects, and every man who waved a waving of gold to the Lord.*

Rashi: The Hebrew word, *al*, which normally means *on*, here, in this verse, means *with*. This word is underlined in the translation. (In fact the Hebrew word *al*, has about 7 meanings)

Example 3: Lv08-28b

Background: The Bible is describing the process by which the Aaron and his sons, the priests, were inaugurated into the priesthood.

Biblical text: *And Moses took them [the Peace offering components] and perfumed them on the altar after the elevation offering*

Rashi text: The Hebrew word **Ayin-Lamed** which usually means spatially on, here means temporally after. (The word after is underlined in the verse).

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Verbs - Conjugation

Daily Rashi - Wednesday, Thursday April 10,11 2013

Although this Rashi is a bit technical, addressing Hebrew conjugations, I will follow my usual custom of finding English equivalents. Additionally, even those fluent in Hebrew will find something new here.

Hebrew

- Consists of *three-letter-roots*.
- The roots are *conjugated* by adding letters before (*prefixes*) and after (*suffixes*) the root.
- Each conjugation is referred to as a *Binyan* (a construction).
- Each Binyan has its own characteristic *meanings*.

Hifil Examples

The *hifil* indicates the causative tense, causing someone else to do something. Very often the causative takes on a distinct meaning as the following example shows.

Biblical text: **Lv09-12**: *They slaughtered the elevation offering; the priests presented to Aaron the blood ...*

Rashi: *Presented (vayamtziu)* is the causative of the verb *to find (matzah)* since when you *present* something you cause the person you are presenting to, to *find* the object presented.

Nifal Examples

The *nifal* generally indicates the passive and deemphasizes the subject.

Biblical text: *And these [birds] you shall despise from the birds; they will not be eaten for they are despicable.*

Rashi: The verses uses the passive - *they will not be eaten* - vs. the active - *do not*

eat them. Thus, the passive has a broader interpretation and prohibits adults from letting minors eat them.

Hitpael Examples

The *hitpael* construction adds a *hey* and *tauv* before the root letters. The *hitpael* construction is used to indicate *interactive* activity. Here are some examples:

- Gn34-09 [Chamor, negotiating a deal with Jacob to unit with him] *And we will (interactively) marry: your daughters we will take for ourselves, and our daughters you can take for yourselves*
- Ex08-04 [Moses bragging about God's power to Pharoh] *Moses said to Pharoh: Interactively glorify [God] by me: Name the time when I should pray for you your servants and maids, to remove the frogs from you and your house...and he [Pharoh] said, 'Tomorrow'; and Moses said 'As you stated [so shall it be] in order that you know that there is none like our God*
- Gn37-18 [Background: Joseph was coming to his brothers who happened to hate him because of his dreams] *They [Joseph's brothers] saw him from afar and interactively plotted against him in order to kill him* [Here the intent is that when Joseph came to them they started an interrogation (presumably about his dreams); the interrogation was not investigative but provocative in order for them to justify (in their minds) executing him.]

Rashi makes a further point about the prepositional phrase used with the interactive hitpael mode

- If the interactive activity is shared, one would use prepositional connectives meaning *with*
- If the interactive activity is one-sided, one uses a prepositional connective connoting objects.

Examples:

Gn34-09 (Above)

- Chamor speaks about marrying of them (*hithchatnu othanu*) instead of the more shared
- marrying with them (*hithchatnu emanu*)

Gn37-18 (Above)

Similarly, since Joseph's brothers were not interested in the truth, the verse uses the objective case

- They plotted on him (*Vayithnaclu otho*) instead of the shared
- They plotted with him (*Vayithnaclue ito*) which e.g. would be appropriate

if they really wanted to find out what his views were (instead of making up their minds before hand (In such a case another verb would have been used)

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 (Hononyms)** 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