

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on Parshat Acharay-Kedoshim-Emor*

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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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## Plural vs. Singular

### *Daily Rashi - Sunday April 21, 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: Lv19-02a

Biblical text: *Every person: his father and mother they shall revere*

Rashi: Note the underlined words indicating a delicate switching from singular to plural. The dual singular plural indicates that

- Both men and women must revere their parents (hence the *they*)
- However, only men are obligated to spend money revering their parents.

Contrastively, women, whose assets, depending on their marriage arrangement, may belong to their husbands, while they are obligated to revere their parents, they are not obligated to outlay money on them (hence *his father and mother*).

## Verbs - Active and Passive voice

### *Daily Rashi - Monday, April 22, 2013*

All languages have the capacity to express concepts in the *active* or *passive* voice. Here are some simple examples in English.

- Active: *I ate the apple*
- Passive: *The apple was eaten by me.*

Both these sentences describe identical scenes. They however differ in *style*.

*Style* conveys extra nuances of meaning. A skilled author can use *style* to indicate things not explicitly stated in the text. There is no one set of rules for *style*. As we go through the year we will tune our ears to the various nuance implicit in use of active and passive. We present below a Rashi on today's Parshah.

Today we explore implications of the passive.

Example: Lv19-20a

Biblical text: *If a man is fully intimate with a woman who is a wintered maid to a man and she has neither been redeemed nor received her freedom, then an investigation will be made but they will not die because she is not free.*

Rashi: The words

- *hot* - (e.g. she was hot with him) - indicates intimacy.
- *cold* - indicates lack of intimacy

- *wintered* (cold plus passive) indicates engaged but not yet intimate. That is, she is helplessly (equals, passive) cold.

Comment: Rashi notes *there is no parallel usage of wintered in Scripture*. By this he means that although the Hebrew word **Choref** for winter does occur frequently in Scripture, it is never used as a denominative in the passive form.

We will also bring this example when we examine denominatives in this week's Parshah.

## Gender Agreement

### *Daily Rashi - Tuesday April 23, 2013*

English reflects gender in the 3rd person but not the first or second person. The following illustrates:

- *I ate the apple* (Valid whether the eater is male or female)
- *You ate the apple* (Valid whether the eater is male or female)
- *He ate the apple. She ate the apple* (Distinguishes gender)

Hebrew distinguishes gender more often than in English. The following summarizes

- 1st person singular (Hebrew like English does not distinguish)
- 2nd person singular (English does not distinguish; Hebrew does distinguish - atah vs. at)
- 3rd person singular (Both Hebrew and English distinguish)

The following peachy example gives a nifty illustration.

#### Example: Lv19-03b

Background: Besides the biblical prohibition of theft, there is a separate prohibition against letting a wage be paid late. Even though the wage *is* paid (and there is no theft), the *delay* in paying the wage causes anguish. The worker is protected against such anguish by a biblical prohibition.

Biblical text: *Do not withhold wages from a worker; his workmanship's pay: she should not be tarried till morning*

Rashi: The verb conjugation *she shall not be tarried* is feminine referring to the

workmanship, not the worker! This implies the law (Rambam, *Sechiruth*, 11:2)  
The prohibition of delaying the pay of a worker applies equally to

- work done by the worker
- work done by the worker's animals
- work done by the worker's machinery.

In other words, a plumber who for example left a vacuum pump pumping water overnight must be paid immediately (that day) because although the plumber himself did not do any work his workmanship (his machine, the pump) did do work.

Comment: Interestingly, an alternate derivation of this most important law may be inferred from a parallel comparison of Lv19-03 and Dt24-14.

- **Lv19-03** *Do not withhold wages your colleague; Do not delay paying the workmanship*
- **Dt24-14** *Do not withhold wages from the worker*

Thus, both the worker and the workmanship are protected from delay of payment.

## Denominatives

### *Daily Rashi - Wed. Thur, April 24,25, 2013*

All languages have the capacity to change a noun, naming an object, into a verb naming an activity. Grammarians call this a *denominative*. Here are some common examples from English as well as two Rashis.

#### **Examples from this week's Parshah:**

We bring examples from both this week's parshah and next week's parshah.

#### Example 13: Lv19-20a

Biblical text: *If a man is fully intimate with a woman who is a wintered maid to a man and she has neither been redeemed nor received her freedom, then an investigation will be made but they will not die because she is not free.*

#### Rashi: The words

- *hot* - (e.g. she was hot with him) - indicates intimacy.
  - *cold* - indicates lack of intimacy
- wintered* (cold plus passive) indicates engaged but not yet intimate. That is, she is

helplessly (equals, passive) col

Example 14: Lv19-26c

Biblical text: *Do not time*

Rashi: *Time* is a denominative from the noun *time*. The Bible prohibits us from basing our actions exclusively on time. For example, it is biblically prohibited from saying *Today is Friday the 13th and therefore I will not go out because it is an unlucky day*.

Example 15: Lv21-10a

Background: The Bible is discussing the higher level of sanctity obligatory on the High Priests.

Biblical text: *And the High Priest...he will not wild his hair and he will not rent his garments* [as a sign of mourning for the dead]

Rashi: To *wild* ones hair is a denominative indicating that the person lets his hair grow *wild*.

Example 1:

*To hammer* means to use the *hammer* in its typical way. Here the verb *to hammer* comes from the noun, *hammer*.

Example 2:

*To flower* means to produce *flowers*. Here the verb *to flower* comes from the noun, *flower*.

Example 3:

*To dust* means to remove *dust*. Here the verb *to dust* comes from the noun *dust*. Hence from the word *Deshen*, referring to animal ash, Rashi infers that the verbal *LeDashno* is a denominative meaning *to ash*, that is to *remove the ash*. The verbal form occurs in **Ex27-03b** in a discussion of utensils of the Temple altar.

Rashi notes the contrast that the same verb can give rise to contrastive denominatives: For example Ps80-10 speaks about flowers *taking root* while Job31:12 speaks about *uprooting* flowers. The driving force here is the Piel (intensive mode) which frequently has a connotation of negation.

Example 4:

**Ex28-14b** discussing the making of the Chosen states *And make two bordered chains of pure gold, twisted like cords, and fasten the corded chains to the fixtures.* Rashi explains that *bordered* is a passive denominative indicating chains placed on the *borders* or ends of chosen (to attach them to the main garment).

Example 5:

*To right* means to *go to the right*. Here the verb *to right* comes from the noun *right*. A similar analysis applies to the meaning of *to left*. This is a Rashi comment on **Gn13-09** which *should* be translated as follows: [*Abraham to Lot, when Abraham asked him to part from him*] *If [you go] to the left, I will right; if [you go] to the right, I will left.*

Notice how all English translations avoid this punchy denominative which adds flavor to the verse.

Example 6 Gn01-22b (from parshat Breishith)

*To be fruitful* means to have many children like a tree producing many *fruit*. Here the verb *to be fruitful* comes from the noun *fruit* and indicates an important attribute of *fruit*, the large number of fruit produced by each tree (Rashi: Gn01-22b)

Example 7 Gn05-28a:

From the noun, *children*, we derive the verb, *to build a household* (Rashi: Gn05-28a). Rashi's perspective is interesting here. We might erroneously translate the Hebrew word *Bayit* as meaning house. Rashi actually translates it meaning *household*. Rashi's translation is extremely precise: Compare the use of *Bayit* in Gn 45-02: "And word was heard in Pharoh's household that Joseph's brother's had come." As Rashi observes, "*The house did not hear; rather the household heard.*"

Example 8,9: Ex01-07 (from Parshat Shemoth) Gn48-16c

From the nouns *insects* and *fish* we derive the verbs *to insectify* (in English, *to swarm*), and *to fishify*; both these verbs refer to producing many children since both *insects* and *fish* tend to reproduce alot. Contrastively, *fruits* on trees, appear in clusters of 3 or 4 at a time. Hence the denominatives

- *to be fruitful* - indicates the verb for normal reproduction
- *to swarm* or *to fishify* - indicates the verb for excessive reproduction (large families).

This denominative illustrates a major literary method of figures of speech, common in all languages. The method is called *synechdoche*. *Synechdoche* refers to naming something by a good example of it. Some common examples of *synechdoche* are

- naming *sweets*, *honey* (*honey* is a good example of sweets)
- naming the *24 hour day*, *day* (*day*, the 12-hour period, is a good example of the 24 hour period)
- referring to *food*, using the term *bread* (*bread* is a good example of food).
- similarly, to *insectify* (*swarm*) or to *fishify* names excessive reproduction by species (insects, fish) that are good examples of excessive reproduction.

*Synechdoche*, like other figures of speech, is a method common to all languages and is used extensively by Rashi.

Comment: Rashi on Ex01-06 literally says on the biblical text *they insectified* (*swarmed*) as follows: *They had 6 children at a time*. This has led some Rashi commentators to erroneously attribute this Rashi to the 6 words in the text: *The Jews were* (i) *fruitful*, and (ii) *insectified* (*swarmed*), (iii) *they multiplied and they became* (iv) *very* (v) *very* (vi) *strong* (in numbers). These Rashi commentators argue that Rashi's comment was not the simple meaning of the text but rather a pun: Rashi derives *They gave birth to six children at a time* from the six adverbs and verbs in the verse.

This is ridiculous. For example, Moses' father, Amram, only had 3 children (Moses, Aaron and Miryam) not 6. All Rashi comments are rooted in the simple meaning of the text. The simple meaning of the text is that Rashi is commenting on the verb *insectify* and explaining that it means excessive reproduction. We can reformulate this abstractly by using the modern concept of the denominative.

However Rashi chose to phrase the form of his comment as a pun. Instead of saying *The word insectify means excessive reproduction* Rashi instead says *They had six children at a time*. The truth is however this is a pun in form not in content. Not all Jews had six children (as evidenced by Amram). However, overall the Jews had an excessive birth rate.

Example 10: *To leaf* means to cover with leafs. Here the verb *to leaf* (*Sacotha*) comes from the noun *leafs*, *bush*, *coverings* (*Sechach*). Then using the *synecdoche* figure of speech which says *honey* can refer to *anything sweet*, and *bread* can refer to *any food*, we infer that *sacotha* (*to leaf*) refers to any type of loose covering. Rashi applies this to **Ex40-03** and *leaf the ark cover over the ark*.

The experienced Hebrew speaker will note that *sacotha* does not exactly mean covering with leafs. It actually refers to covering with leafy branches the type of covering used in the Succah holiday.

### Example 11: Ex39-03

Biblical text: *And they skyed the gold sheets and cut threads in order to weave with the azure, with royal purple, with the worm-dyed wool, and with the linen.*

Rashi: *To sky* is a denominative meaning *to hammer and make flat* so that it has the appearance of a rolled out sky.

### Example 12: Lv06-19a

Background: The Bible is describing the procedures to offer a sin-offering atoning for the sinner's sins.

Biblical text: *The kohen who sins it shall eat it; it shall be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting.*

Rashi: The phrase *who sins it* is a denominative referring to the priest who does the procedures of the sin offerings.

### Example 13: Lv09-15a

Background: The Bible is describing the sacrificial procedures used to dedicate the Temple.

Biblical text: *And he [Aaron the High Priest] ...took the nation's sin offering, and he slaughtered it and sinned it like the first one [that is, like his first sin-offering]*

Rashi: The phrase *he sinned it* is a denominative referring to performing the procedures of the sin-offering

## 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

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**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*

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**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)

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

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**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.

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**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

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**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)

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**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

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**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.

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**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