

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Parshat Emor - BeHar BeChuQoThai

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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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Adjectives, Adverbs

Daily Rashi: Sunday Apr 28, 2013

Recall the difference between multiple adjectives and nested adjectives.

- (1) *I grabbed the red rubber ball*
- (2) *I grabbed the Brazilian-rubber ball.*

The grammatical functions are as follows

- (1) In sentence (1) both the words red and rubber are adjectives describing ball.

The ball is red and the ball is made of rubber

- (2) In sentence (2) the word rubber describes ball but the word Brazilian describes rubber. It is rubber from Brazil. We say that
 - rubber functions adjectivally while
 - Brazilian functions adverbally. An adverb describes the adjective rather than the noun itself.

An excellent example of this is found in the following example.

Example: Lv24-04a

Biblical text: *On the pure Candellabrah, Aaron will prepare the wicks*

Rashi:

Rashi gives two possible meanings.

- Adjectival: On the Candellabrah which is purified of soot and ashes, Aaron will prepare the wicks
- Adverbial: On the Candellabrah made of pure gold, Aaron will prepare the wicks.

So

- Gold adjectivally describes the material of the Candellabrah while
- Pure describes the type of gold used, pure gold

Comment: The astute reader will observe that the Bible doesn't even mention the word gold; it is elliptical and understood. Thus Rashi's adjectival explanation seems preferable. And indeed, Rashi gives this explanation second indicating that he prefers it.

Puns

Daily Rashi: Monday Apr 29, 2013

We tend to think of puns as something clergy does in a sermon to emphasize a point or something done in bars to impress people. Not so! Many secular scholars consider puns as simply another legitimate grammatical rule. After all you might add an "s" to a word to indicate the plural; similarly you might change the spelling of a word to hint at some idea. Such a change of spelling is called a *spelling pun* or *metaplasms*. Please find below some simple English examples of spelling puns as well as Rashis based on this idea.

Example 1:

A girl texts her friend about her date and writes "*I really liiked the guy.*" Here by deliberately mis-spelling "like" as "liiked", with an elongated "iii", the girl indicates intensity of liking!

Example 2:

The Bible states "*God, Lord, creeeatd Adam, dust from the ground and breathed into him a living soul. (Gn02-07a)*" Notice the spelling pun, the deliberate misspelling of 'created' as *creeated*. **Rashi:** "*The elongated "eee" indicates intensity of creation. When God created Adam he not only gave him a living soul, as he did the animals; he also gave him a spiritual soul by which Adam could obtain the hereafter.*"

Here is an example from this week's Parshah

Example 4: Lv27-42a

Background: The Bible describes how the Jews will repent after the punishments that God brings on them and God will remember his covenant.

Biblical text: *I will remember my covenant with Jacoob.*

Rashi: The word Jacoob is spelled fully (With an extra *o*). This is a pun with the following interpretation

- Jacob spelled deficiently would refer to the Jews in exile who suffered like Jacob suffered with Laban
- Jacoob spelled fully would refer to the Jews in the time of redemption, in the time of King Messiah, when they will be fully developed.

Comment: Rashi actually develops a double pun: One on Jacoob and one on Elija. Thus it appears that Rashi is being homiletic. Not so. Rashi is simply following the grammatical rules of puns.

Example 3:

The Bible states, "*God blessed the humans; God said to them: 'Humans, be fruitful; Humans, multiply; Humans, fill the earth; human, conquer her'...*(Gn28-01a)" Notice the deliberate spelling change of "humans" (plural with an 's') to 'human' (without the plural 's'). **Rashi:** *This hints that in a healthy male-female relationship the male human should be possessive ('conquer her'). There is actually a double pun here: The misspelled human refers to single man; the word*

'her' does not refer back to 'earth' but rather to the woman.

Philosophical Consequences

We pause for a moment to dwell on the possible sexism in a phrase like 'conquer her.' This possible sexism annoys some people. I would respond that these people have good values but are unaware of the nature of puns. Certainly, if the Bible itself said that man should conquer his partner that would be sexist. But the Bible makes no such statement. Indeed, if anything the Bible admonishes the man that he must give his wife food, clothing, and adequate physical relationship! However, when you make a pun - in contrast to writing prose - you may use exaggeration to hint at a point. This is an important component of the pun rules. The punned phrase '*Human conquer her*' is simply an exaggeration mirroring required possessiveness in any relationship.

Some people may still question whether a healthy relationship requires any one-sided possession. Consider the following three scenarios.

Scenario 1:

The husband continually asks his wife where she had been that day, who she had seen, details of conversations, etc. Such a relationship is 'jealous' not possessive and wrong.

Scenario 2:

The husband, upon witnessing his wife carrying on animated conversation with say a business partner of hers might ask 'What transpired.' This is healthy. Since the female is more vulnerable than the male, a mild amount of possessiveness makes a woman feel secure and protected.

Scenario 3:

The husband gives his wife total independence and never inquires about her interactions with other men. While this isn't bad, it is not ideal. The relationship can be improved with a modest amount of male possessiveness.

Notice in the above examples, how the flavor of the biblical puns was preserved with a comparable English spelling pun. This is a translation technique developed by me. I hope future translations of the bible (including JPS) use this informative technique. For more information on the fascinating topic of puns as well as references please see my article "*Biblical Puns*" published in **The Jewish Bible Quarterly**, Volume 34#3, pp 190 - 197, 2006. You can access this article at

Denominatives, Deverbatives

Daily Rashi: Tuesday Apr 30, 2013

All languages have the capacity:

- To change a noun, naming an object, into a verb naming an activity. Grammarians call this a *denominative*.
- To change a verb, naming an activity, into a noun, naming an object. Grammarians call this a *deverbative*.

Here are some common examples from English as well as two Rashis.

Examples from this week's Parshah:

Example 17: Lv21-14a

Background: Biblical paragraph **Lv21-10:16** lists prohibitions on whom the High-Priest can marry.

- Verse **Lv21-15** prohibits a High Priest from *descecrating* his progeny in his nation
- Verse **Lv21-14** prohibits a High Priest from marry a *descecrated*.

Rashi: The noun *descecrated* in **Lv21-14** is a deverbative of the verb *descecrated* in **Lv21-15** (both of which are italicized). That is a *descecrated* is a woman who was born of a prohibited *descecrated* union.

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 *synendoche*

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 leaf. 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

Example 14: 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 15: 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 16: 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.

Verbs - Conjugation

Daily Rashi: Wednesday May 1, 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*.

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:

- Lv26-12a [The Bible lists the reward for observing the commandments.] *And I [God] will stroll among you and I will be your God.* Rashi: The Hebrew verb used is the interactive form (*hitpael*) of the verb meaning *to walk*. *Walking* in the active tense is purposeful: You go from one place to another. In the *hitpael* tense the root means *to stroll*, to interactively walk in friendship with someone else. Also note the contrastive concluding phrase: *Although I am your God and leader nevertheless I will stroll amongst you.* [*Strolling with God* refers to an intimate relationship of prophecy without burning fire dreams where God's commands to his prophets are easy to implement by people.]
- 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 Pharaoh] *Moses said to Pharaoh: 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 [Pharaoh] 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)

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.

Gender

Daily Rashi: Thursday May 2, 2013

English is very particular about pronomial reference. A pronoun should

- refer to the last mentioned noun
- agree in gender.

Hebrew is not that particular. A pronoun should

- refer to something *relevant in context*
- agree in gender.

An excellent example is the following.

Example: Lv24-09a

Background: The Bible requires us to take two tenths of flour for each loaf of bread for the dozen breads left on the Temple table. The Bible concludes this section as follows.

Biblical text: *And she will belong to the Priests; and they will eat him in a holy place.*

Of course, the biblical Hebrew uses the word equivalent to the English it. But what do these two different its refer to.

Rashi: The word

- him refers to the bread which is masculine
- she refers to the Minchah offering.

For even though the word Minchah is not even mentioned in the biblical paragraph, nevertheless, any Temple activity involving plants is referred to as a Minchah offering. Consequently, even though the Bible never refers to the 12 loaves of bread (and frankincense) left on the Temple table as a Minchah, the concept of Minchah is *relevant in context*. Here is the proper translation of the verse

Biblical text:

- *And it [female gender referring to the 12 loaves which are classified as a Minchah offering even though the Hebrew word Minchah is not mentioned] belongs to the priests;*
- *and they will eat it [male gender referring the 12 loaves of the Minchah which consisted of 12 loaves of bread and frankincense] in a holy place.*

Comment: We again emphasize that this approach and translation may sound strange to English ears who are use to a different treatment of pronouns.

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