

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Parshat BeHar-BeChuOoThai-Bamidbar

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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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Indirect Objects

Daily Rashi: Sunday May 5 2013

According to Rashi, indirect objects in Hebrew, always indicate *purpose* or *dedication*. Here are a few examples

- Nu13-02 (God speaking to Moses) *Send at your discretion (if you want to) people to spy out Canaan*
- Nu10-02 *Make for yourself personal silver trumpets: ... you can use them to gather the nation...*

- Ex25-02 *Speak to the Jews and let them dedicate to me Temple donations*
- Lv27-30d *All produce-tithes (whether) from seeds or from fruits, ... is dedicated to God* [Rashi mentions one consequence of this: Since the tithe is dedicated to God, it must be consumed under conditions of sanctity in Jerusalem]

As we go through the yearly cycle we will have the opportunity to see other examples of this approach of Rashi to indirect objects. There are 1-2 dozen such Rashis on Chumash.

Formatting - Crossout

Daily Rashi Monday May 6 2013

English allows the use of non-word *formatting* to indicate meaning. Examples include:

- bold
- italics
- underline
- bullets
- paragraphing
- strikeout

In my article, Biblical Formatting, I show that the biblical text also has formatting techniques with

- the same goal as English formatting, but with
- different forms.

Today we focus on the formatting technique of strikeout.

- In English, strikeout is indicated by stricken text
- In Hebrew, strikeout is indicated by dots above the text.

Although the form - dots, strikeout - differs, the meaning remains the same.

- In English, strikeout indicates that while the stricken word should be in the sentence it isn't
- In Hebrew, dots above the word also indicate that while the word should be in the sentence it isn't.

In translating a biblical sentence with strikeout into English we actually use the English strikeout formatting to emphasize the meaning of the strikeout.

There are 10 examples of dots, or strikeout, in biblical Hebrew.

Example 1: Nu03-39a

Background: The bible is discussing the census that Moses took of the various tribes and the Levites in the wilderness.

Biblical text: *These are the census figures of Moses and Aaron...*

Rashi: Technically, Aaron should be censused with the Levites. So

- We expect Aaron to be included
- But he wasn't censused with them because he was a Levite; consequently he is stricken out which in Hebrew is indicated by dots.

Comment: The above analysis bears strong and new ideas on the idea of *Peshat*, the simple meaning of the text. Although the Rashi commentary is based on inuendo and non-explicit verbal meaning, it nevertheless is *Peshat*. Why? Because the dots correspond to strikeout and strikeout in English is part and parcel of the simple meaning of the text.

Plural vs. Singular

Daily Rashi: Tuesday May 7 2013

Note: Today's posting is a rarity. We show how the obvious grammatical approach to Rashi does not work as well as a meaning-based approach.

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. Today's example however, shows a straightforward way to interpret rashi based on the *meaning* of the word a popular (but as we shall see) an incorrect way of interpreting Rashi based on the *grammar*

Example: Lv26-46a

Biblical text: *These are the statutes and Torahs that God commanded Moses at Mount Sinai.*

Rashi: Notice the underlined s indicating a plural (in Hebrew, *Toroth* vs. *Torah*).

Rashi: Note the underlined words indicating a delicate switching from singular to plural. The dual singular plural indicates the plural of Torah. But what is Torah.

1. *Torah* does refer to the 5 books of Moses, the Torah
2. *Torah* also refers to a short paragraph of principles governing laws.

Explanation (2) can be best explained through etymology.

- According to many opinions Torah comes from the root *Hey-Resh-Hey*, meaning *pregnant*.
- In Hebrew like in English we refer to ideas as germinating and embryonic, punning the life cycle with the idea cycle!
- Accordingly a *brain-pregnancy*, a *Torah*, would refer to basic principles from which the practices of a domain are inferred.

Using this explanation we can understand how biblical chapters begin or end using the word Torah which means principle. Some examples are

- (Lv07-01) (Introduction) This is the Torah of the Guilt offering
- (Lv07-11) (Introduction) This is the Torah of the Thanksgiving offering
- (Lv11-46) (End) This is the Torah of the (Kosher) animals and birds

We can now approach explaining the plural, *Torahs*, in Lv26-46a

1. Two Torah books were given: the five books of Moses and the accompanying oral law explaining them.
2. The laws that God gave to Moses, summarized in Leviticus, are the collections of principles (Torahs).

Either way the verse implies the existence of an accompanying oral law that was given to Moses at Sinai. Either:

1. Two Torah books were given, the written and oral, or
2. Only principles (*Torah*) were given in writing. But these rules were used in practice and hence the accompanying explanations already existed in the time of Moses, pointing to a Torah law.

Why do I reject the popular explanation that Torahs refers to two torahs and instead approach the explanation of Rashi through meaning? Because, the plural of Torah occurs frequently and in these cases it refers to collections of principles.

Here are a few examples.

- (Gn26-05) *Abraham watched my commandments, my statutes and my principles (Torah)*
- (Ex18-16) *Jethro advised Moses to delegate authority and teach the delegates the statutes of God and His principles.*

Reference, Antecedents

Daily Rashi: Wednesday May 8, 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.

We can summarize this treatment of reference as follows:

English is user friendly, with little ambiguity. The listener does minimal work

Hebrew is user engaged. Sentences have ambiguity. Listener must work to understand.

This treatment of reference applies to pronouns, clauses, and other referenced objects.

Example from this week's Parshah.

Example 2: Nu02-53a

Background: The bible sequentially mentions the following 5 items

- (A) Watching the temple is the job for Levites (Nu02-51)
- (B) Non-Levites watching the temple will die at the hand of heaven (Nu02-51)
- (C) Non-Levites (Israelites) camp according to flag and position (Nu02-52)
- (D) Levites camp around the Temple (Nu02-53)

- (E) All this to prevent anger (Nu02-53)

Biblical text: But the Levites will camp around the Temple so that there will no anger.

Rashi: What does the underlined word anger, in (E), refer to?
The Biblical paragraph, Nu02-51:53, is read as follows.

- (A) Watching the temple is the job for Levites (Nu02-51)
- (B) Non-Levites watching the temple will die at the hand of heaven (Nu02-51)
 - (C) Non-Levites (Israelites) *camp* according to flag and position (Nu02-52)
 - (D) Levites *camp* around the Temple (Nu02-53)
- (E) All this to prevent anger (Nu02-53)

In other words, the underlined word anger in (E) refers, not to the immediate antecedent, (D), but to both antecedents (C),(D).

Notice that (A) is to (B) as (C,D) is to (E).

- The Levites watch the temple; if non-Levite Israelites watch the temple they die at the hands of heaven
- Israelites and Levites each camp in their respective positions; if Israelites camp in Levite positions there is anger.

Example 1: 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.

Connective words - *Akh* - Usually, most of Daily Rashi: Thursday May 9, 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, *Aleph-Caph-Lamed*. It can mean

- *Nevertheless*
- *Most of*
- *Probably (most of the time)*
- *Usually (most of the time)*

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: Lv27-28a

Biblical text: *Most [Akh] charamim [a technical Hebrew term connoting dedication] which a person sanctifies to God from his possessions....can neither be sold nor redeemed [since] all charamim are sacred to God.*

Rashi: The word *most [akh]* implies limitation [most, but not every]. To explain this note that there are 3 ways a person could make a *Cherem*.

- (A) He could say e.g. this animal is a *Cherem for the temple*
- (B) He could say e.g. this animal is a *Cherem for the Priests*.
- (C) He could say e.g. this animal is a *Cherem*.

Cases (A) and (B) are clear. Case (C) is ambiguous

You could interpret that case (C) is interpreted to mean a dedication to the temple since the end of the verse states *all charamim are sacred to God*

You could cite the verse that *Every cherem in Israel belongs to you the Priests* (Nu18-14), implying that case (C) is interpreted to mean a dedication to the Priests.

Rashi text: The Hebrew word **Kaph-Lamed**, normally translated as all or any, can also mean any part, as indicated by the underline. By translating the word this way the verse informs us that if only some blood was brought into the Tent of Meeting and sprinkled there (the way certain specific sin offerings are) then the totality of the sin-offering is invalidated.

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.

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.

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