

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Korach-Chukath-Balak

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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.

For the half year period Oct-2012 through May-2013 we studied the Rashi grammar rule. This entire series will be summarized and conveniently available in zip format in the near future.

For the coming half year period, we will study the Rashi reference rule, also known as the citation rule or colloquially at the other-verse rule. This deceptively simple rule- the use of citations or references by Rashi - is actually a super-rule, that dominates a large portion of Rashis. This rule was chosen by the authors of the Passover Haggadah and is exclusively featured in the Aramaean tried to destroy my father Haggadah passage.

We are also devoting this series to home-schoolers. The Rashis will be presented in home-schooling format and can be used on any age group above 5. Nevertheless, the scholarly aspect of the Rashi will not be ignored: Citations and references are very popular in Rabbinic sermons and in Talmudic passages.

We briefly illustrate the richness of the reference/citation rule by exploring the sister rule, reading comprehension, so popular now in America. Consider the sentence: At a red light, Abe quickly jumped out and purchased a coke for Sarah. Consider the following levels of reading comprehension questions:

- *Citation level: Who purchased the coke. **Answer**: Abe*
- *Inference level: From where did Abe jump out. **Answer**: A car*
- *Speculation level: Why did Sarah need a coke. **Answer**: She was very thirsty.*

Students in first - third grade may find the citation level easy but the inference and speculation level hard. The speculation level is frequently powerfully used in Rabbinic sermons. This is but a taste of what we will do this year.

As usual, when making transitions in the Rashi Newsletter we welcome positive and negative comments as well as requests. Please send all comments to RashiYomi@GMail.Com.

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Reference - *Daily Rashi Sunday June 9 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children or in a rabbinic sermon.

Read the reference and target verse below and then answer the questions.

- **Reference verse Ex19-05** [God to the Jews just prior to the revelation of the Decalogue] *...and you will become for me a a priestly kingdom and a holy nation*
- **Target verse Nu16-03b** [Korach attacking Moses' rule] *The entire congregation is, they are all holy...why [then] are you leading the congregation of God?*

Question: What information does the reference verse give about the target verse.

Answer: Both verses use the underlined word *holy*.

Rashi explains **Nu16-03b** as follows: *All Jews were at the revelation. So why do you Moses rule over them?*

We in turn have explained the Rashi comment by equating *revelation* with becoming a *holy nation* which is the jist of Korach's argument: *The entire nation is holy.*

(Home)Schooling tip: This Rashi can be used to show the difference between Rashi method and Rashi text. Rashi

- does not say he is using the reference method
- but the best way to understand the Rashi comment is to link it to the reference method.

Children are often excited to see more than the text; here we see the inner mind of Rashi and how the raw method gives rise to a specific textual formulation.

Reference - meaning - *Daily Rashi Monday June 10 2013*

Rashi here uses references to illuminate word meaning. To often we treat word meaning as equivalent to looking up something in a dictionary. Not so! Word

meaning is a dynamic live process.

The exercises below are good for both children and adults. One should spend some time and ask why different activities are called by the same word. What are the commonalities? How many can you formulate? Even you or your child formulating one is worthwhile.

Read the two verses below and then answer the following question: *Why is the word calm used in both verses. What to these two situations have in common?*

Here are the 3 verses.

1. **Nu17-20** [God speaking about the blossoming rod test where each tribe gave a rod from a tree] *And the person whose rod blossoms is the one I chose as priest; [and by so doing (creating a blossom)] I will calm down from me the complaints of the Jews [for choosing Aaron as priest]*
2. **Gn08-01** [God after the flood had wiped out the world] God remembered Noah and all those with him in the ark, God passed a wind on the earth and the waters calmed.

Answers: This is one of those questions for which there is no one answer. Children may think of one of two things. Adults may think of others. Here are some attempts.

Noise.

- People who complain make noise; you calm the argument by reducing noise.
- A flood is very noisy. When the raining stops and the waters recede the noise calms.

Energy

- People who complain are very energetic and do all sorts of actions
- A flooded ocean is tumultuous with enormous amounts of energy. When the flood stops the energy drops

Damage

- Complaining people may cause damage; non complainers don't
- A torrential flood kills people; a calm sea does not.

Please do try this exercise (on someone who has not yet read our wonderful Weekly Rashi digest and doesn't know all these answers yet!)

Reference - meaning - *Daily Rashi Tuesday June 11 2013*

Rashi here uses references to illuminate word meaning. To often we treat word meaning as equivalent to looking up something in a dictionary. Not so! Word meaning is a dynamic live process.

The exercises below are good for both children and adults. One should spend some time and ask why different activities are called by the same word. What are the commonalities? How many can you formulate? Even you or your child formulating one is worthwhile.

Read the two verses below and then answer the following question: *Why does the same Hebrew word used for weaning of children and ripening of fruits.*

Here are the 2 verses.

1. **Nu17-23** [A description of Aaron's blossoming rod] *It flowered and budded and ripened almonds*
2. **Gn21-08** [Description of the birth of Isaac] *And the lad grew and was weaned; Abraham made a big party on the day Isaac was weaned*

Answers: This is one of those questions for which there is no one answer. Children may think of one of two things. Adults may think of others. Here are some attempts.

Completion of Growth

- The child does not need his mother's milk.
- The fruit (almond) is complete and no longer needs the plant buds to nourish it

Independence; by oneself

- The child can now live without his mother
- The almond can be taken off the tree; the almond no longer needs the tree

Damage

- If a child stopped nursing too early (s)he would get hurt
- If you pluck an unripened fruit from the tree it is hurt (and if you eat you will get hurt)

Please do try this exercise (on someone who has not yet read our wonderful Weekly Rashi digest and doesn't know all these answers yet!)

Reference - inference *Daily Rashi Wednesday June 12 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children or in a rabbinic sermon. As we explained in our introduction:

- certain reading comprehension deals with raw words
- certain reading comprehension deals with inferences from these words

Read the reference and target verses below and then answer the questions.

- **Reference verse Nu15-20** *You shall offer up bread of the first of your dough for a Terumah gift just as you do the Terumah gift of the granary, so shall you present this one*
- **Target verse Nu18-12a** *All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they [the Jews] shall give to the Lord, these have I given to you [Aaron and the priests].*

Question: What information does the reference verse give about the target verse.

Hint: What is stored in granarys.

Answer:

Granarys are used to store wheat (and maybe oil and wine). So the **Nu15-20** verse is explaining that the first fruits of wheat, oil and wine are also called *Terumah* like the first bread of the dough.

Reference - phrase *Daily Rashi Thursday June 13 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children or in a rabbinic sermon. Unlike the previous examples where the link between the two verses was one word, here the link is a phrase. Thus this Rashi is a bit advanced.

Read the reference and target verses below and then answer the questions.

- **Reference verse Gn49-07** [Jacob's comment on Shimon and Levi during his deathbed advice: Recall Shimon and Levi had destroyed the city that stood by when Schem raped their sister] *Cursed be their anger when it is fierce, their blowing up when harsh*
- **Target verse Nu23-08a** [Bilam who was asked to curse the Jewish people] *How can I curse when God himself doesn't curse*

Question: What information does the reference verse give about the target verse. More specifically, Bilam claims he can't curse because Jews never get cursed. But the reference verse shows Jews do get cursed. Can you examine the reference verse and explain exactly what was cursed and how this helps understand Bilam.

Answer:

- Balak wanted Bilam to curse the Jewish people; however,
 - Jacob only cursed their anger and blowing up not the people themselves.
- This is shown in the underlined words. Hence Bilam is justified in saying that God doesn't curse which means God doesn't curse them.

(Home) Schooling tip: Children, even young children, can find a link that is one word. But when the link is a *contrast* of word phrases - *curse their anger vs curse the people* - they find it harder. Hence this Rashi is a good introduction to a new skill. The first time they see it it might be bewildering.

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