

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Matos-Masay-Devarim

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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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We devote this issue to references that illuminate meaning: All references and citations brought by Rashi in today's issue, are used to illuminate the meaning of a target biblical verse. Additionally, we present 2 examples of reference **fill-ins**, which is a lot of fun for kids (and adults).

Reference - Fill-in *Daily Rashi Sunday July 7th 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children. It can also be used by adults who wish a richer participatory experience of Rashi.

Read the reference and target verses below and then correspond the items in the reference verse with the items in the target verse. The first two items have been corresponded for illustrative purposes.

Reference verses Nu32-03 [The Bible is describing the cities outside of Israel that the Reuvenites, Gadites and Menashites desire]

1. *Ataroth* ____ *Target 2* _____
2. *Devon* ____ *Target 1* _____
3. *Yaazayr* _____
4. *Nimrah* _____
5. *Cheshbon* _____
6. *Elalay* _____
7. *Sevam* _____
8. *Nevo* _____
9. *Beon* _____

Target verse Nu32-34:38 [The bible is describing the cities that the Reuvenites, Gadites and Menashites (re) built]

1. *Devon* ____ *Reference 2*-----
2. *Ataroth* ____ *Reference 1*-----
3. *Aroayr* _____
4. *Atroth Shofan* _____
5. *Yazayr* _____

6. Yagbehah _____
7. Beth Nimrah _____
8. Beth Haran _____
9. Cheshbon _____
10. Elalay _____
11. Kiryathayim _____
12. Nevo _____
13. Baal Meon _____
14. Sivismah _____

Answer: We use T for target and R for reference. We have the following correspondences: R3=T5; R4=T7(Changed named), R5=T9; R6=T10, R7=T14(Changed name: Rashi), R8=T12.

R9 has no correspondence in the Target verses. In the target list T8, T11 and T13 have no correspondence. Perhaps R9 and T13 correspond.

Comment: Rashi comments only on the correspondence of Reference #7 and Target #14. He gives no reason for the change in name. He expects the student to perform the other correspondences him/herself.

Reference - New Meaning *Daily Rashi Monday July 8th 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children. It can also be used by adults who wish a richer participatory experience of Rashi.

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

- **Reference verses Gn49-26** [Jacob, who is blessing Joseph] *The blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors to the borders of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.*
- **Target verse Nu34-10a** [Moses is describing Israel which the tribes will inherit] *And you shall VeHithAVeeThem your east boundary from Hazar-Enan to Shepham;*

Question: What information do the underlined word in the reference verse give about the underlined word VeHithAVeeThem in the target verse.

Answer: The word *VeHithAVeeThem* is a verb, meaning *to make a border*.

Comment: Rashi uses a different reference verse to explain the Target verse. Both the reference verse that Rashi uses and the verse we have selected shed the same light on the Target verse: They both show that *VeHithAVeeThem* means to make a border. While it is important to understand why Rashi selected specific illustrative verses, when teaching Rashi initially, it is sometimes useful to show that alternate verses can be used.

Reference - Chapter - *Daily Rashi Tuesday July 9th 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children. It can also be used by adults who wish a richer participatory experience of Rashi.

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

- **Reference verses** **Psalm 79:1** *A Psalm to Asaf: God, heathen nations have come to your inheritance, they have defiled your Temple, they have made Jerusalem into Eyim*
- **Target verse** **Nu33-44** [The bible is describing the journeys of the Jews] *And they journeyed from Ovoth and camped in the Eyay pass on the Moabite border*

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

Answer: The phrase *they have made Jerusalem into Eyim*, means *they have made Jerusalem into ruins*. (If you or the child you are teaching does not want to derive this, you could alternatively look up the meaning of this reference verse in any translation). Hence *the Eyay pass*, could be translated *the ruins pass*, that is a pass in the road which was once built up but now in ruins.

Comment: Rashi uses a different reference verse to explain the Target verse. Both the reference verse that Rashi uses and the verse we have selected shed the same light on the Target verse: They both show that *eyim* means ruins. While it is important to understand why Rashi selected specific illustrative verses, when teaching Rashi initially, it is sometimes useful to show that alternate verses can be

used.

Reference - meaning *Daily Rashi Wednesday July 10th, 2013*

The question and answer below can be used as a starting point for teaching young children. It can also be used by adults who wish a richer participatory experience in learning Rashi.

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

- **Reference verses** **Isiah 10:33** [The Bible describes how God will protect us from the enemy] *Behold: The Lord, God of Hosts, will de-branch the bough with a maaraytzah*
- **Target verse** **Dt01:29** [Moses rebuking the nation for doubting God can help them conquer Canaan] *And I told them: Do not be afraid and do not be aartzun from them [the Canaanites]*

Question: What information do the reference verse give about the word aretz in the target verse.

Answer: The word or verb *aratz*, in the reference verse, means *to destroy, to shatter, to ruin*. (If you or the child you are teaching does not want to derive this, you could alternatively look up the meaning of the reference verse in any translation; however, most children can infer from context that *maaraytzah* is an instrument that shatters and ruins).

Hence the target verse could mean any of the following: *Do not be afraid and do not let the enemy shatter* [your resolve to defeat them], or *Do not be afraid and do not let the enemy ruin* [your resolve to defeat them] or *Do not be afraid and do not let the enemy destroy* [your resolve to defeat them].

Comment: Rashi use different reference verses to explain the Target verse. Both the reference verses that Rashi uses and the verse we have selected shed the same light on the Target verse: They both show that *aratz* means to *shatter, destroy, ruin*. While it is important to understand why Rashi selected specific illustrative verses, when teaching Rashi initially, it is sometimes useful to show that alternate verses can be used.

Also notice how we gave three translations: *shatter, ruin, destroy*. Either of them is

equally valid. It is important when teaching meaning to understand that there may be multiple translations. It is an important exercise to try and find alternate translations. This way the student participates in the translation process.

Reference - Not exclusively: Fill-in, Symbolism

Daily Rashi Thursday July 11th 2013

This example is brought by Abraham Grossman in his wonderful and scholarly book on Rashi (in Hebrew). I bring it to show how even good scholars can easily fall into the error of not understanding Rashi. All Rashis are simple and straightforward. Let us examine.

Reference verses:

1. **Nu11-34:35** *They call this place kivroth taavah...*
2. *from kivroth taavah the nation journeyed to chazayroth*
3. **Nu12-16** *From Chazayroth they journeyed to Midbar Paran*

The following chapter (**Nu13**) describes the spies that Moses sent to Canaan. The spies brought back a negative report which turned the people against God. The spies slandered God and said he couldn't conquer the land.

Target verses

Nu33-16:18

1. *They journeyed from Sinai and camped in Kivroth taavah*
2. *They journeyed from Kivroth taavah and camped in Chazayroth*
They journeyed from Chazayroth and camped in Rithmah

Rashi: **Reference verses** #1,#2,#3 correspond to **Target verses** #1, #2, #3. Hence Midbar Paran, #3 in the reference verses corresponded to Rithmah, #3 in the Target verses.

So far so good. This type of correspondences we have seen in Sunday's Rashi, July 7. But unlike Sunday's Rashi, Rashi goes a step further and tries to explain the difference. Rashi argues that since the biblical root, *Rothem*, means *coal*, therefore (*burning*) *coals* must symbolize what happened in *Midbar Paran*. But we know what happened in *Midbar Paran*, the spies slandered God and Israel. Rashi was undoubtedly influenced by Koheleth 10:11 which compares slander to a snake-bite. That makes sense: We all know what it is like to hear slander about a friend, co-worker, boss, wife or even leaders. At first the slander may be ignored but it pops again and burns in the mind like snake venom sometimes somewhat

paralyzing a normal relationship. Since *Rothem* means *burning coal* Rashi takes *Rithmah, Coal*, as the name of a place where slander happened.

This sounds reasonable. It can be made precise by realizing that Rashi, after using the **reference** method is also using the **symbolism** method.

However, Rashi instead of stating this abstractly, instead cites an obscure verse in Psalms 120:1 which also compares slander to burning coals. But Psalm 120 was written after the Torah. For that matter, Koheleth was also written after the Torah. So it appears that Rashi is using a metaphor from a later period to justify a biblical name. Grossman concludes that Rashi was being *midrashic* for the sake of exhorting good moral values (avoid slander!)

Not so! The relationship between slander and burns, besides occurring in Koheleth and Psalms, also is logical and occurs in other cultures, a sort of universal metaphor. The recipient of slander feels burned (Compare the English metaphor). Rashi always chose to use concrete verses (even if the periods didn't match) rather than give abstract explanations. However, while the *form* of the Rashi comment reflects a mismatch of periods, the *driving force* of Rashi, a universal metaphor, is sound and logical.

To sum up: The driving force of Rashi is not some metaphor in a Psalm written much later: The driving force of Rashi is the reference method: The parallelism-fill-in of the 3 places as shown above. Once the reference method has told us that *Midbar Paran* is called *rithmah*, Rashi uses the symbolism method to justify the changed name by noting (as in all languages) that slanders *burns*. Rashi however communicated his understanding using later-written verses familiar to all.

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 (Homonims)** 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