

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Nitzavim-VaYayLech-Haazinu

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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 Sep. 1st, 2013*

This example, is a typical *Rashi* using the *reference* method. It can be used as the basis for teaching children, adults or for a Rabbinic sermon.

Read the reference and target verse below and then answer the question that follows.

Reference Verse

- **Dt32-01:02** [The final rebuke poem of Moses written in poetic form]
Hear heavens and I will speak Listen earth to my words
My words will torrent like rain my statements will sprinkle like dew

Target Verse

- **Dt31-19** [Moses, delivering a final rebuke to the Jewish people before death]
And now, write down this poem, and teach it to the Jewish people, [until] they know it by heart

Question: Based on the **reference verse** explain the meaning of the underlined word poem in the **target verse**.

Answer: The poem in the **target** verse refers to the final rebuke poem in the **reference** verses.

Comment: Based on the age of the student, the teacher can adjust the difficulty level for the student as follows.

- Advanced level: The teacher can ask the student to search the Bible and find the final rebuke poem
- Intermediate level: The teacher can ask the student to read **Dt32** and explain the word poem in the **target** verse.
- Elementary level: The teacher can ask the student to confirm that Dt32 *looks* like a poem (based on the brick like structure in which it is written) To accomplish this the teacher may need to show the student an actual scroll.

Reference - *Meaning Daily Rashi Monday Sep. 2nd, 2013*

This example, is a typical *Rashi* using the *reference* method. It can be used as the basis for teaching children, adults or for a Rabbinic sermon.

Read the reference and target verse below and then answer the question that follows.

Reference Verse

- **Jr42-10** [The verse describes how the Jews will be forgiven by God when they repent] *I will plant you* [the Jewish people on their homeland] *and I will not NoTeSh you*

Target Verse

- **Dt29-27** [The verse is describing the punishment that will befall the Jewish people if they worship idols] *And God was NoTeSh the Jewish people from their land with great anger...*

Question: Based on the **reference verse** explain the meaning of the underlined Hebrew word NoTeSh in the **target verse**.

Answer: To *NoTeSh* means to remove, to uproot

Comment: Based on the age of the student, the teacher can adjust the difficulty level for the student as follows.

- **Advanced level:** The teacher can ask the student to search the Bible using a search engine. The student should then try and figure out what *NoTeSh* means.
- **Intermediate level:** The teacher can ask the student to read **Jr42-10** or similar verses and explain the Hebrew root *NoTeSh*.
- **Elementary level:** The teacher can ask the student to read **Jr42-10**. The teacher can then point out that *NoTeSh* is the opposite of *to plant* and ask the student what the opposite of *to plant* means.

Comment: Note, that I selected a different verse than Rashi. In fact, *NoTeSh* has several meanings: It means *to remove*; it also more specifically means *to uproot*. As can be seen, *uproot* is a specific form of *removal*. Thus this example is a good example of finding *meaning* since there are several types of answers.

Reference - Matching *Daily Rashi Tuesday Sep. 3rd, 2013*

The following Rashi illustrates use of **reference** to **match up** a list of items in verses. This is an excellent example of the reference method. It is especially useful in teaching children. Children and adults find **matchups** challenging and easy (and like doing them).

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

Reference verses Dt30-15 [Moses in talking to the people] *See, I give you today*

- (A) *life*
- (B) *good*
- (C) *death and*
- (D) *evil*

Target verse Dt30-16 *Which I command you today*

- (1) *to love the Lord ... to walk in his paths to watch his commandments*
- (2) *and you shall live and multiply and God will bless you...in the land..*
- (3) *But if your heart strays and you don't listen ...and you bow to idols...*
- (4) *Then I tell you today, that you will be destroyed*

Question: Match up A,B,C,D with 1,2,3,4. For example Moses says that he gives the Jews "good" (B). Where in (1),(2),(3),(4) do we find *good*? Match up all 4.

Answer: The **match ups** are as follows

- 2B - it is *good* to *live* and *be blessed*
- 4C - *death* corresponds to national *destruction*
- 1A - you achieve "*eternal* *life* (the hereafter)" by *loving God and observance*
- 3D - *evil* consists of your heart straying and *worshiping idols*

Reference - Meaning *Daily Rashi Wednesday Sep. 4th 2013*

This example, is a typical *Rashi* using the *reference* method. It can be used as the basis for teaching children, adults or for a Rabbinic sermon.

Read the reference and target verse below and then answer the question that follows.

Reference Verse

- **Is37-27** *Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as a Shedaymah before it has grown*

Target Verse

- **Dt32-32** [Moses poetically comparing the sins of the Jewish people to grapes]
For their wine comes from Sedomite vines, from the Shadmoth of Amarah

Question: Based on the **reference verse** explain the meaning of the underlined Hebrew root shadmoth in the **target verse**.

Answer: A *shdaymah* (*shadmoth*) refers to some plant type for example a field or crops (or grain)

Comment: Based on the age of the student, the teacher can adjust the difficulty level for the student as follows.

- Advanced level: The teacher can ask the student to search the Bible using a search engine to find the meaning of the root *Shadmoth*.
- Intermediate level: Show the student **Is37-27** and ask the student what they think *shedaymah* or *shadmoth* means.
- Elementary level: Show the student **Is37-27**. Point out the underlined words - grass, herb, *shdaymah* - which symbolize littleness and meekness. Ask the student what plant words - *field*, *grain* - fit best with *shdaymah*.

Comment: I selected a different reference verse than that of Rashi. The reason for that is we don't really know what *shdaymah* means. Rashi gives a verse with the best translation *field*. However, several *plant types* could be the meaning (for example, *grain*). When first teaching Rashi it is best to develop the student's critical skills and showing him or her the variety of meanings a word can have. After these skills are developed the student can then learn the preferred meaning that Rashi gives.

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