

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on VaYayTzaY

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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.

We are currently in our 5 year, half-year cycle:

** For period: Oct 2012 - May 2013 - we studied the Grammar rule*

** For period: June 2013 - Sep 2013 - we studied the Reference rule*

** For period: Oct 2013 - May 2013 - we will study the Parallelism rule*

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.

Here is a very simple example of parallelism: Gn49-11 states

(Because of the plenty in Judah's reign) Clothes are washed in wine

(Because of the plenty in Judah's reign) "Suth" [are washed] in blood-of-grapes

Rashi comment: Wine is parallel to blood-of-grapes, showing that blood-of-grapes means wine. Similarly, Clothes are parallel to suth showing that suth means cloathing.

Thus the parallelism method explores repeated verse phrases and allows inferences based on the repeated passages.

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 Nov 10th, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn32-04a**

Commonality: Both these verses speak about *angels*.

Questions: After reviewing the two verse phrases discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in the verses
- 2) What is different in the verses
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the verses to ascertain their context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper, it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

- **Gn32-02** *Messengers of God* [angels] met Jacob
- **Gn32-03** Jacob said when he saw them: this is a **camp of God**
- **Gn32-03** He called that place **camps**
- **Gn32-04** Jacob sent messengers to Esauv

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verse speak about messengers
- 2) The first verse identifies them as *messengers of God*; (The next two bullets also emphasize that this *camp of God* met Jacob's camp and they formed *camps*, an alliance)
- 3) Rashi therefore concludes that the messengers that Jacob sent to Esauv, mentioned in the last bullet, were in fact *messengers of God* from the camp he just met, and with which they formed an alliance; that is they were actual angels.

Comments: The Hebrew term for messenger is **malach**, a word which by itself, can mean *human messengers* or *angels* (God's messengers). This makes the Rashi more palatable.

The astute reader will ask me why Rashi says (**Gn32-03**), "The plural word *camps* refers to the Israelite-based angels and the angels in his own camp." I seemed to have interpreted differently by stating "Jacob made an alliance between his camp

and the camp of angels." By so doing I deemphasized the presence of angels in Jacob's camp. Why did I do this and how do I reconcile this with Rashi?

I did this because of the request by Jacob (**Gn35-02**) to remove the idols. So with Jacob, were people who didn't detest idols (or possibly worshipped them, for example his slaves). Therefore, I think the emphasis in the plural word **camps**, is that Jacob made an alliance between his own camp and the camp of angels from Israel. Rashi does not necessarily dispute this. Rashi points out that it is reasonable that Jacob always had angels accompanying him, for example, angels which Rebecca sent with him, to save him from Laban. However this point of Rashi - the angels in Jacob's camp - is an outgrowth and offshoot of the alliance between Jacob's camp and the angel camp. In any event, Rashi would certainly have to concede (because of **Gn35-02**) that the entire camp of Jacob was not angels and therefore he welcomed an alliance with a predominantly angelic camp that came from Israel.

Reference - *Daily Rashi Monday November 11, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn31-54c**

Background: Today's verse discusses how Jacob made a treaty party with Laban

Commonality: Both the following phrases describe "What was eaten at the party."

Questions: After reviewing the two phrases discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both verses
- 2) What is different in both verses
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the supportive verses, cited afterwards, to ascertain context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

- **Gn31-54** Jacob slaughtered sacrifices on the *mountain*
- He called to his family to eat bread
- They ate bread
- They tarried in the *mountain*

Here are the answers to the questions.

1) Both verse phrases describe what was eaten at the party. Both verse phrases describe the party in the mountain

2) The verses differ in the description of what was eaten.

- One verselet uses the word sacrifices
- One verselet (actually two) use the word bread.

Hence the Rashi: The word *bread* can refer to *anything eaten*, to any part of the meal, including slaughtered meat.

The linguists call this *synecdoche*. *Synecdoche* is a literary technique that refers to the capacity e.g. of *honey* to mean anything *sweet*, for *bread* to mean any *food*, and similar instances where good examples of a category can refer to anything in the category.

Reference - *Daily Rashi Tuesday, November 12, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn31-53a,b,c**

Commonality: All these verse phrases describe the G(g)ods by which Laban and Jacob swore to bind a treaty.

Questions: After reviewing the two words discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both phrases
- 2) What is difference in both phrases
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the verses to ascertain their context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

- **Gn31-53** The God of Abraham
- and the god of Nachor, will judge between us [Jacob and Laban]
- The god of their fathers
- Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.

Here are the answers to the questions.

1) In all verse phrases, an oath is taken in the name of a G/god

2) a) God is also referred to as Fear (*Fear of Isaac* means *God of Isaac*)

2b) Jacob swore by his God (*God of Abraham, Fear of Isaac*) while Laban swore by the god of Nachor, Nachor was in fact a common ancestor of both Laban and Jacob.

This is in fact what Rashi says: *In binding the treaty by an oath, Jacob swore by the true Jewish God, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, while Laban swore by idolatrous gods, the god of Nachor.*

Rashi continues: Hence

- the G in *God of Abraham* and the F in the *Fear of Isaac* are spelled with a capital since they refer to the true God while
- the g in the *god of Nachor* and the g in the *god of their fathers* is spelled with a small g since it is an idolatrous reference.

Biblical Hebrew of course does not use capital and small letters; however certain names of God are considered holy while others are profane (and these have legal consequences). So Rashi explains that the *God of Abraham* is a holy name while the *god of Nachor* and the *god of their fathers* are a profane name. I have neatly adapted this Rashi to an English translation above.

Reference - *Daily Rashi Wednesday Nov 13, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn31-17a**

Today's Rashi illustrates an order parallelism. That is, two passages list

- identical sets of items but
- in different sequences.

The Rashi inferences are based on the reversed orders.

Commonality: Both these verses speak about *family (sons / wives)*

Background:

- In **Gn31-17**, Jacob is leaving Laban and taking his entire household
- In **Gn36-06**, Laban is leaving Jacob and taking his entire household.

Questions: After reviewing the two words discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both verses
- 2) What is different in both verses
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the verses to ascertain their context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

- **Gn31-17** *Jacob got up in the morning and took a) his sons and b) wives on the camels And he drove his c) herds and and d) possessions*
- **Gn36-06** *Esau took his a) wives, b) sons, c) daughters, d) herds, e) animals f) and possessions*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses describe taking family and belongings upon leavings
- 2) Contrastively,
 - **Gn 31-17** mentions males before females (sons, wives)
 - **Gn36-06** mentions females before males (wives, sons)

Comment: The astute reader may note several things

- **Gn36-06** is more detailed. Wives, sons, daughters, etc.
- **Gn36-06** states wives, sons, daughters, so males (sons) are after wives but before daughters

In fact, Rashi simply says: *By Jacob males precede females (sons, wives) while by Esau, females precede males (wives, sons)*. Rashi does not go further! No explanation is given *why* one order wives,sons or the other order sons, wives is preferred

I have deliberately brought this Rashi and completed the analysis of parallelism to show that Rashi sometimes does not answer questions, but raises questions. Rashi points out a distinction here but does not give a preference or explain other problems or even the relationship between the word orders and the people (Jacob, Esau) involved.

This is not always emphasized when teaching Rashi. Rashi's goal is

- not to bring answers to all questions (though he frequently does) Rather Rashi's goal
- is to consistently apply *methods* (such as we do in this list). Sometimes the *methods* leave unanswered questions (as happens today)

However it is part of Rashi's greatness that he noticed these subtleties and brings them to our attention.

Reference - *Daily Rashi Thursday Nov 14, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn29-25c, Gn29-34c**

We first repeat this posting from last week. Then we show that this week's parshah has a similar Rashi. This is exciting since it allows students to apply learned skills to new situations.

Commonality: Both these verses speak about the naming of children

Background: Rebecca is giving birth to two children. The first child is Esau while the second child is Jacob.

Questions: After reviewing the two words discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both words
- 2) What is different in both words
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the verses to ascertain their context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

- **Gn25-25** *The first child came out, ruddy,...they named his Esauv*
- **Gn25-26** *Afterwards his brother came out...he called him Jacob*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses describe an activity of naming a child
 - 2) Contrastively,
- **Gn 25-25** uses the plural (*They*) indicating that those present at the birth named

him

- **Gn25-26** uses the singular (*he*) indicating that one person named him, presumably his father.

This is in fact what Rashi says: *Esauv came out ruddy; he looked completely mature so everyone named him Esauv, which means, Made, Complete. Contrastively, Jacob came out grabbing Esauv's heel; Isaac, prophetically inspired, call him Jacob, meaning heal grabber. Although his personality was not apparent, Isaac, divinely inspired, understood that his future life was symbolically indicated by Jacob grabbing Esauv's heal.*

Now we apply the same reasoning to the comparison of these two verses both describing the naming of Jacob's children.

- **Gn29-32** *she* [the mother] named him Reuven
- **Gn29-34** *he* named him Levi.

Similar to our comments above, Rashi notes the contrast without further explaining it. We would easily explain: *With the other children, the names reflected unanswered prayers, for example, Reuven is a prayer that God should see my affliction [Reuven means see affliction]. Contrastively, Levi corresponds to the prayer, that "my husband will join me" (the meaning of Levi is joining), a reference to the fact that Jacob preferred Rachel to Leah. Since Jacob named the child, Levi, it shows that he acquiesced to Leah's prayer and agreed to spend more time with her.*

Rashi cites a Midrash supplementing the above. I would explain the Midrash as follows: *Levi, the child, grew up, knowing that he united daddy and mommy. He became interested in uniting and helping people. Consequently, this resulted in his tribe serving in the Temple and assisting people in getting reunited.*

In other words, I consider Rashi's reference to the Temple to be a *consequence* of the act of Levi to unite people at birth!

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 (Honyms)** 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