

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on NaSoH

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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 have studied parallelism for about a year now. We are trying a new format: We are covering all Rashi rules and giving brief explanations.

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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Daily Rashi Hyponyms Thur - Friday May 29/30, 2014

Rashis covered: **Nu06-04a,b**

Background: The bible is discussing the Nazarite, the person who vowed to abstain from wine. The biblical verse lists what is prohibited to Nazarite.

Biblical Text: During his nazariteship, he should not eat anything derived from wine vines, from *pits* to *skins*.

Rashi: The Hebrew words in the text should be translated as *pits* to *skins*, that is, from the inside (pits) to the outside (skins) of the grape.

This Rashi appears to be a mere dictionary definition. Not so; this Rashi cleverly brings a contrastive word pair. The technical term for this is *hyponyms*, words denoting subcategories of a larger category. For example, lilys and roses are hyponyms of flowers. So to, pits and skins are hyponyms of grapes. Rashi frequently accompanies word definitions with hyponymy, the contrast reinforcing and enriching the dictionary definition.

Daily Rashi Saturday-Monday May 31-Jun 2 2014

Rashis covered: Nu06-23a,b,c

Biblical Text: *Speak to Aaron and his children: This is the way you should bless the Jewish people: be involved in speaking personally to them*

We present the Rashi translated with paraphrases and then explain why we have so translated.

Rashi text: *Be involved in speaking to them* - the grammatical form used is not a traditional command, *Speak to them*, but rather a gerund/infinitive command form which should therefore be translated, *be involved in speaking to them* [Rashi brings other examples which we will cite below]. I should explain that the normal command form is "emor" while the infinitive command is "amor" pronounced with a kamatz and spelled fully. Some rishonim (e.g.Ibn Ezra) dismiss this difference and argue that all commands are the same. Rashi brilliantly identifies the infinitive command as a continual command vs. a one time command. Let us see the consequences of this Rashi interpretation as explained by Rashi himself.

- What does *be involved in speaking to them* mean in contrast to a simple command, *Speak to them*? It means *continually speak to them till they fully understand it*.
- The verb *Speak* is accompanied by an indirect object, *to them*. Indirect objects in the bible generally point to a personal aspect [other examples are given below]. In other words, make the communication personal: Speak gently, without rush, and speak with sincerity.

We now bring other examples of these Rashi rules.

Examples of the indirect pronoun meaning something personal.

- **Nu13-02** *Send for yourself* (spoken to Moses) *spies to spy out Canaan*. Rashi: *For yourself*, indicates that the spies were sent out solely at Moses' own personal wish (for his benefit).
- **Ex25-02** *Take for me, Temple donations*. Rashi: *For me*, indicates that it is not enough to give a Temple donation. It must be donated *for the sake of the Temple*.

In both these Rashis, Rashi interprets the biblical indirect object, *for*, as indicating a personal aspect. There are about a dozen such Rashis in Chumash. You can find them with a search engine by looking for words indicating indirect objects like *li* (for me), *lahem* (for them) etc. As indicated, this is an excellent exercise for Rabbis, adults and children.

Examples of the gerund infinitive used in the sense of continual doing

- **Ex20-08a** *Be involved in remembering the Sabbath*. Rashi: Pay attention to *continually* remember the Sabbath.
- **Ex13-03a** *Be involved in remembering the Exodus*. Rashi: Because remembering the Exodus is a *daily* requirement.

In both these Rashis, the infinitive command (the command using the gerund) indicates, according to Rashi, continual activity (Hence our translation, *be involved in the Sabbath*). There are about a dozen other examples of the infinitive command in the bible. See if you can find them. Rashi makes similar comments on all of them.

Now let us return to the Rashis on **Nu06-23**. We make the following points

Point 1: There are two unusual features in the verse:

- The gerund/infinitive command and
- the indirect object.

Rashi interprets these features the same way he always interprets such features: As indicating

- *continual* speaking and
- *personal* communication.

Rashi further elaborates and explains *continual* and *personal* to mean

- say it over and over till they fully understand it
- say it with sincerity with a focused intent and gentle delivery.

Point 2: Our chumash texts point to three Rashis. However as we just explained there are only two concepts. I would therefore read these Rashis as follows

- Be involved in saying to them: (Rashi) Like other uses of the infinitive/gerund. Be involved in saying: Continually say it until they understand it.
- Saying to them: (Rashi) Fully; with sincerity and gently non-rushed

I have gone into detail to show the problems and issues in reading and interpreting Rashi. Let me summarize

- According to all views (the traditional way of reading the Rashi text and my own interpretation above) Rashi is making two points: i) make sure they understand it ii) speak with intention, gentleness and focus.
- I have derived these two inferences using Rashi principles that occur in many other verses. These Rashi principles discuss the implications of the gerund/infinitive command and use of the indirect object.
- However, it is difficult to harmonize the Rashi text with these grammatical principles taught by Rashi. I am not aware of an alternate grammatical explanation of the Rashi comments. (I leave out the technical discussion of the Rashi text; but those readers who know how to read Rashi text may benefit from using the ideas above to analyze them)

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) *Don't 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