

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on ChuKaTh

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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 Grammar Nu19-02b Thu July 26, 2014

Rashis covered: **Nu16-02b**

In today's issue we explore issues of simple vs. forced meaning. More specifically we study one Rashi rule which does not appear intuitive. We also study the Rashi paragraphing rule which has a distinct flavor from other rules. The paragraph rule is not as punchy as other rules. It leaves one with a feeling

that something is missing. All the more reason to expose oneself to the rule so one can learn.

Biblical text: [God speaking to Moses] *Speak to the children of Israel: Let them take for your sake a perfect, unblemished, red heifer....*

Rashi: The actual translation of the biblical text is *take to you a perfect*. However, indirect pronouns, *to you*, are always translated as indicating a personal aspect. Hence we have translated the verse *for your sake*.

Comments: Such Rashi translations look forced. Are they really the simple meaning of the text? If they are the simple meaning why they look so forced?

There are two responses to this

1st: Rashi *consistently* applies this principle. *Every* indirect object is interpreted as meaning with a personal aspect. See <http://www.Rashiyomi.com/rule2125.pdf> and our examples on **Nu10-02b**.

2nd: In my article, *Peshat and Derash: A New Intuitive and Analytic Approach, Tradition* 18(4), <http://www.rashiyomi.com/rashi.pdf>, I explain that *simple meaning of text* refers to the *spontaneous understanding* of a native speaker. We are native speakers of English not biblical Hebrew. The main point of Rashi here is that to the native biblical speaker, the use of an indirect pronoun, *take to you*, connotes *take for you*. If we spoke biblical Hebrew we would simultaneously respond with Rashi's understanding.

This is an important principle in understanding Rashi.

Daily Rashi Paragraphing Gn13-07b Fri July 27, 2014

Biblical Text: *There were disputes between Abraham's and Lot's shepards [even though] the Canaanites and Prezites were then inhabiting the land.*

Background: To understand the Rashi comment we first examine the overall structure of **Gn12** and **Gn13**. God tells Abraham and Lot to journey. The two biblical chapters discuss four separate consequent journeys as follows

- Travel to Schem: Owned by Canaanites. God promises land to Abraham
- Travel to Egypt: Owned by Egypt. God punished Egypt but Abe must leave
- Travel to Canaan: Owned by Canaanites. Abe/Lot fight and separate over

resources. God repromises land to Abraham but only after Lot leaves

- Travel (Lot) to Sedom/Amorah: Lot banished; Sedom/Amorah destroyed

Here is a table describing **Gn12 Gn13**. Notice that this table gives a birds eye overview of the entire text rather than concentrating on minutae.

God tells Abraham to Journey with his household (e.g. Lot) from his homeland			
Schem: Abraham arrives in Schem owned by the Canaanites	Egypt: Abraham arrives in Egypt owned by Egyptians	Canaan: Abraham & Lot return to Canaan owned by Canaanites. Abraham's and Lot's shepherds fight because of limited resources	Sedom/Amorah: Lot arrives in Sedom and Amorah, a very wicked city
God promises Canaanite land to Abraham's descendants	Abraham is thrown out even though Egyptians are punished; Egypt retains ownership of its land	God re-promises Canaanite land to Abraham but only after Lot separates	[Not in current text but in later text] Lot is thrown out of Sedom/Amorah. Sedom/Amorah do not retain ownership of their land (They are destroyed)

Rashi: By comparing the following biblical phrases

- *God promised Abraham the land of Canaan*
- *Lot and Abraham disputing on resources for shepherding*
- *Canaanites are present owners of land*
- *Lot desired good pasture land even at the expense of living with evil people (which is why he moved to Sedom and Amorah)*
- *God re-promised Abraham the land of Canaan albeit after Lot left*

we see that the juxtaposition of the Abraham-Lot dispute and the current ownership of the land by Canaan (vs. future ownership of the land by Abraham) is a juxtaposition of causality: Abraham and Lot fought because Lot wanted good pasture land and knew this land would one day belong to Abraham and Lot. We see this juxtaposition because the entire two chapters, Gen. 12 and Gen 13 deal with moving into lands and getting thrown out because of present owners.

Comment: Notice that the flavor of the Rashi paragraph rule is different than the flavor of other Rashi rules. It is not as punchy. The basic idea is that the juxtaposition of items in a paragraph, this juxtaposition in and of itself without further words, indicates Authorial intent.

Because the paragraph rule is not that punchy, it is easy to suggest that phrases were placed in the text later (Some attribute such suggestion to the Ibn Ezra; but the Ibn Ezra speaks about mysteries and doesn't explicitly mention such ideas). As we can see there are several stories in the two chapters (not just two phrases) all dealing with the rights of Abraham and Lot to dwell in owned lands. Because this is the theme of two chapters we are justified in seeing the theme (land ownership) and dispute on resources as causal to each other.

We present several other Rashis below where the driving force of the Rashi is paragraph juxtaposition. We hope, after exposure, to these examples, the student will feel more at home with these Rashis.

Daily Rashi Paragraphing Nu20-02a Sat July 28, 2014

Biblical text: *The entire congregation came to Tsin Wilderness, ...,*

- (1) *Miryam died,*
- (2) *She was buried there*
- (3) *There was no water*
- (4) *The congregation complained.*

Rashi: The juxtaposed four bulleted phrases are related by *causality*.

- (1) &(2): Miryam was buried there *because* she died there
- (3) & (4): The congregation complained *because* of lack of water
- (1) & (3): There was no water *because* Miryam, in whose merit the congregation had water, died

Comment: Again, we see the different flavor of the Rashi **paragraph** rule; it is not as punchy. However, the basic idea is sound and correct and used in all languages: Juxtaposed sentences in the same paragraph indicate Authorial intent and connection even if that connection is not totally obvious (as is the case here where we see Miryam's death as causing the lack of water). The main driving force of the Rashi is the juxtaposition of two disparate sentences in a paragraph; the juxtaposition in and of itself justifies an inference of connection.

Daily Rashi Paragraphing Nu20-01b Sun July 29, 2014

Biblical Text: **Nu19** Laws of Red Heiffer to remove ritual impurity when a person dies. **Nu20-01** The congregation came to Tzin wilderness...and Miryam died.

Rashi: The juxtaposition of i) The Red Heifer chapter and ii) The Death of Miryam shows Authorial intent of commonality. [Rashi mentions the *general* idea of atonement: The Red Heifer atones and the death of righteous people atone.

However, we can go a step further] Here are some other examples of commonality

- At the death of the righteous people, people speak about their good deeds and this encourages mourners to practice these good deeds
- The symbolism of the red heifer also suggests the importance of the soul: (Rav Hirsch gives the following) Mixing red-heifer dust in water is symbolic of life. Man is soul (*water*) + flesh (*dust*); when the dust settles (= *flesh* settles) the pure water remains (the *soul* lives on inspiring similar good deeds)

Comment: Again we see the non-punchy flavor of the Rashi paragraph rule. *All* we can assert is that there *is* commonality. Rashi himself leaves open what this commonality is (He simply says that sacrifices and death of the righteous atone). We explored one other possibility. Note: Our intent was not to identify the commonality with this observation; we rather simply listed it as an example of commonality. If the reader doesn't like the Hirschian symbolism then the reader may reject that particular assertion of commonality; but the reader must acknowledge the general assertion of commonality.

In summary:

- The simple meaning of the text is the commonality between the two paragraph parts
- The exploration of *what* this commonality is takes various forms and is open to supplementation.
- No one assertion of commonality is the only meaning of the verse; each commonality adds more meaning.

Daily Rashi Paragraphing Nu21-01a Mon July 30, 2014

Biblical Text: *Death of Aaron.....And the southern Canaanite Kingdom of Arad heard of Israel's nearness and went out to war*

Rashi (Literal text): What did he hear? He heard of Aaron's death and the absence of the protection of the Israelite High Priest. So he decided that war could be successful now.

Rashi (Suggested approach): The two paragraphs - death of Aaron and the declaration of war - are juxtaposed to indicate causality. Aaron was the High Priest

of Israel and its protector. When the protector died the time was ripe for war and so he declared war.

Comments: I regard the literal text of Rashi as a pun, not the real reading of Rashi. Indeed, the verse describes what the kingdom heard: they heard Israel's approach not Aaron's death. Therefore, I have interpreted this Rashi consistent with all the other paragraph juxtaposition Rashis we have done.

Note also that the southern kingdoms knew of Israel's nearness. Only now - after the High Priests death - did they decide to declare war. So Rashi creates a pun: They didn't really hear of Israel's presence but rather of Aaron's death. However, the main driving force of the Rashi is the juxtaposition.

Summary: In this week's issue we have reviewed 4 Rashis using the paragraph method. As the reader gets exposed to more examples they become proficient and use to this rule. It is an important rule. It does not have a punchy flavor but is frequently used.

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 R0ASHI 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