

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on 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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The most frequent questions I receive about the Daily Newsletter are the following.

- *What do the classical commentators on Rashi say about his reasons?*
- *If they say such and such what are you adding?*
- *If they don't say what you say, why are you saying it?*

So the next year, or perhaps more, will be devoted to citing Rashi commentators and explaining how the methods of the Newsletter sharpen and crystallize them.

We will be citing mostly from the 4-6 classical Rashi commentators: Sifsay Chachamin, Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, and Chizkuni. We will occasionally add insights of Rav Hirsch and Malbim.

Database Daily Rashi Dt01-01a Lv10-03b Thu-Fri 7/31-8/1/14

The first verse of Devarim begins *These are the words that Moses spoke to Israel...*
Verse 3 repeats the introduction *Moses spoke to all of Israel.*

Rashi: These are the words: *Words of rebuke*

Sifsay Chachamim: *The text should have begun Moses spoke to all Israel. And Rashi answers 'because they were words of rebuke.'*

Rashi Newsletter Explanation: Rashi uses the **Database** method. In a database inquiry you inquire about the presence of a certain feature or attribute of the text. By examining many cases one can clearly identify minor deviations which indicate Authorial intent.

Rashi asks "How do biblical paragraphs being."

We can perform this database inquiry ourselves and see the following

- God spoke to Moses to say over (several dozen)
- God said to Moses to say over (several dozen)
- *God said to Aaron to say over (only 2) (Lv10-08)*
- God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai ...on the 1st of the 2nd month...(Nu01)
- *These are the words that Moses spoke to Israel as God commanded...(Dt01-01)*
- *In the transjordan ...Moses spoke these words to all of Israel...(Dt01-03)*

The database inquiry exposes several unusual features. These features are targets of

Rashi comments. Here are some of the features.

- What is special about the two verses where God spoke to Aaron instead of Moses
- Why is God's name absent in **Dt01-01** (*These are the words which Moses spoke...* instead of *this is what God spoke to Moses*)
- Why does **Dt01-01** begin *these are the words* instead of *Moses spoke to the Jews as God commanded them* (as it says in verse 3)
- Why does **Dt01-03** reverse the order of **Nu01-01**
 - God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai
 - In Transjordan Moses spoke to the Jews as God commanded

The **Database** method has a different flavor than other Rashi rules. Other Rashi rules are punchy and confrontational. The database method is more conversational, conjectural and suggestive. You never prove your point; however you do show the point is strongly hinted at. Alternative explanations are possible. Let us now examine the two verses, **Dt01-01** and **Lv10**.

Lv10-08: Interestingly, the Rashi explaining **Lv10-08**, *God spoke to Aaron to say over*, is found not on **Lv10-08** but on **Lv10-03b**. Rashi weaves a tail from the colorful events of **Lv10**. He states or conjectures the following

- Aaron's two sons offer a sacrifice to God without being allowed to, because they were drunk and thought they could do whatever their father Aaron could do
- God killed Aaron's two sons on the spot
- Aaron knew his sons were drinkers and silently accepted God's will since he had already tried to cure their habit
- As a reward, God gave the commandment prohibiting Priests from serving drunk to Aaron: *God spoke to Aaron to say over*.

Rashi's justification? He was certainly *motivated* by the strange sequence of events in the colorful chapter 10

- The improper offering of Aaron's two sons
- Their death
- Aaron's silence
- God commands Aaron to prohibit priests from serving drunk

However, the true driving force of the Rashi comment is the database anomaly that only twice in the Bible, does a biblical paragraph begin *God spoke to Aaron to say over*. The just-listed 4 bullets are motivational only.

Dt01-01: Here again Rashi is conversational and conjectural. Rashi read the following Deuteronomic chapters in which Moses rebukes the Jewish people for their mistakes. He then looks at the opening verse *These are the words that Moses spoke...* and notices the strange introduction along with the absence of God. So Rashi tersely explains (*because*) *these are words of rebuke*.

Comment: We have only brought the first line of the sifsay chachamim. We have explained that the method used was **Database**. The sifsay chachamim argues that *Rashi knew that these were words of rebuke because the Hebrew uses the verb said instead of the verb speak (dbr vs amr) and said vs. speak connotes harshness*.

The sifsay chachamim certainly has *explained* why the verse uses *said/dbr*. But I would argue that the sifsay chachamim is incorrect in stating that the *main driving force* behind the Rashi comment *these are words of rebuke* is the use of *said* vs. *speak*. Rather the actual content of the first few Deuteronomic chapters shows that Moses spoke words of rebuke. In other words, in explaining Rashi, why focus on one word (*said* vs. *spoke*) when you can focus on several chapters of meaning.

Summary: Rashi stated *these are words of rebuke*. Sifsay chachami further stated *because it should have stated God spoke to Moses instead of These are the words. This email newsletter has explained further that sifsay chacham was attributing to Rashi the database method*.

Grammar-Idiom Daily Rashi Dt01-09a Lv21-01a Dt03-21c Sat-Sun-Mon 8/2-8/5/14

Biblical text (Dt01-09): *And I (Moses) spoke to you at that time to say over, I can no longer bear you (your burdens)*

Rashi: To say over: God so ordered

Sifsay Chachamim: The phrase to say over is exegetical and always refers either to

- a request for a confirmation
- a request for a response, or
- a request to say over to others

Since neither of these three apply here, Rashi exegetically explains it in a 4th way

- God ordered it

In other words, even if I (Moses) wanted to bear your burdens, I couldn't volunteer, because God wouldn't let me.

Gur Aryeh: There are two verbs for speech in Hebrew

- **DBR** means to *cite*
- **AMR** means to *speak*

Thus the phrase *God cited to Moses to say over* does not need commentary since the citation is brief and terse and needs an explanatory context. But the phrase *speak...to say over* does not make sense [And therefore Rashi interpreted the phrase *to say over* exegetically to refer to God].

The Gur Aryeh provides the following example.

Example: Lv21-01a *God spoke to Moses:*

- *speak to the priests, the children of Aaron and*
- *say to them*

Rashi: *Speak ...and say to them: Speak to the adults that they should instruct children.*

Rashi Newsletter response to Gur Aryeh: The Rashi comment on **Lv21-01** is based on the bulleted **Parallelism:** Bullet #1 is *speak* and bullet #2 is *speak*: So the bullet #1 and #2 *speak* must refer to different things. Hence the Rashi comment: Bullet #1=adults, Bullet #2=children. This however does not apply to Moses' comment "And I spoke to you at that time to say over" There is no parallelism.

Summary: The Gur Aryeh correctly explains the Rashi comment on **Lv21-01**; however, this correct explanation is not applicable to **Dt01-09a**.

Mizrachi: [Mizrachi gives a long explanation however he cites the following charming example]

Biblical Text (Dt03-21): [Background: God ordered Moses not to go to Israel; Moses prays for God to rescind the decree] *And I (Moses) beseeched God at that time to say over.*

Rashi: *To say over: This is one of the three passages where Moses told God: 'I will not let go till you answer me.'*

Rashi Newsletter Approach: First, we use the **Grammar** rule: The Hebrew *laymor* is the infinitive of the verb to *speak*. It literally means *to say*. Next we use the **Idiom** rule. The infinitive *to say* in the context of a command to *speak* or *cite*

idiomatically means *for discussion*. In other words there are two ways to talk:

- You can say something apodictically; you say it once and that is the end of it
- You can say something for discussion: You say it and expect feedback.

Hence we would interpret the verses as follows

- **Dt03-21**: And I (Moses) beseeched God at that time for purposes of discussion
In other words, this was not like other prayers where one prays and there is no continuation. Moses' prayed for discussion. He literally wanted to argue with God about the decree on him not to enter Israel. Hence for purposes of discussion.
- **Dt01-09**: And I (Moses) spoke to you at that time for purposes of discussion
Moses was telling the people he could no longer bear their burdens. He asked them (see the verses following verse 9) to bring wise respected individuals from their tribe to work under him. *So Moses was asking for a response*. We disagree with the sifsay chachamim that no response was requested since a mere half a dozen verses later Moses explicitly asked for a response! However, Moses knew the people would repent; they wanted his leadership not the leadership of their tribes. So Moses explained that "God decrees this. I can't do anything about it."

In other words: The word *laymor to say over* which we have interpreted *for purposes of discussion* means exactly that: Moses wanted a tribal discussion and a selection of judges to work under him. However, Rashi had to add "Because God prohibited me from being the sole judge" to show that they couldn't argue with Moses on this.

Comments: The sifsay chachamim (and Mizrachi) are dry: "To say over is exegetical and hence Rashi attributes it to God." More precisely there is no connection between to say over and the attribution to God. They are interpreting to say over simply because it is there not because it has meaning.

Contrastively, the Rashi newsletter newsletter explains to say over using the **Grammar** and **Idiom** rules. The phrase now has meaning: *For purposes of discussion* and this discussion is mirrored in the following verses. Furthermore, my explanation is consistent with the explanation of sifsay chachamim as well as the explanation of the Mizrachi. I however have added some taste and spice: I have not whimsically said *well it is an extra word and hence exegetical and hence we can explain it in some way* but rather I have said *the word indicates a consequent discussion* which i) in the case of Moses' prayer is a request for a debate with God and ii) in the cases of Moses and Israel is a request for further judges *even if the*

Jews don't want tribal judges since God has ordered it.

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