

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on EyQuev

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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.

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.

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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Today's issue is devoted to analyzing the Rashis in the first verse of the portion of the Shma in this week's parshah.

Format-Paragraph Daily Rashi Dt11-13a Thur 8/14/14

Biblical Text (Dt11-10:17): [Paraphrased translation]

- (v. 10) *Israel is not like Egypt which is well watered by the Nile*
- (v. 11-12)[*Rather*] *Israel is mountainous dependent on rain water [Therefore] God continuously monitors it all year*
- (v. 13-15)**Hence** *if you listen to God's commandments ...then God will give you rain and grass...*
- (v. 16-17)*Beware less you don't listen to God but deviate [Because God will get angry] and there will be no rain*

Rashi Text: The bolded word, **hence**, refers to the previous verses

Rashi commentators (Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim): In other words

- if you listen you will have rain
- if you don't listen you will not have rain

Rashi newsletter: We have supported the Rashi commentators with the concept of **paragraph format** and have provided a bulleted condensed version showing the logic of the various paragraph parts. In this way the Rashi meaning is more transparent and the Rashi itself is related to the principles of good essay writing in all languages.

Summary: God explains that Egypt had the Nile but Israel is dependent on God's providence. **Hence** if you listen to God you will have rain while if you deviate from God's word you will not have rain.

Gur Aryeh: Gur Aryeh does not take the approach of the Rashi Newsletter, Sifsay Chachamim and Mizrachi. Rather Gur Aryeh states "The bolded word **hence** must refer to the above because otherwise it is superfluous (extra)."

Thus Gur Aryeh uses the superfluous approach. The Rashi newsletter opposes use of the superfluous rule as tasteless, ambiguous, incorrect and lacking focus. The approach of the Rashi commentators and this Newsletter emphasizing overall structure is deeper and more specific.

Grammar *Daily Rashi Dt11-13b Fri 8/15/14*

Biblical Text: If you will *listen and listen* to my commandments I will give rain

The issue is to explain the repetitive phrase *listen and listen*.

Rashi: If you will #1) listen in the old teachings you will merit to also #2) listen in the new teachings. (Hence the two *listens*).

All Rashi commentators (Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh): The doubled verb indicates some type of extraneousness. The Talmud in fact gives a long list of examples and concludes *whenever you can explain repetition exegetically do so; otherwise simply say that the Torah uses human phraseology*. Consequently, all commentators explain the doubled *listen* to refer to listening to both old and new commandments or to both old traditional learning and new nuances.

Rashi newsletter approach: We have several times introduced the idea of the grammatical habitual. For example

- I am listening to the Rabbi's sermon ==> Indicates listening once
- I listen to Rabbi's sermons ==> Indicates multiple listenings, a habit

We suggest that the double verbs that occur in the Torah *always* refer to a habitual ongoing activity. Consider the following example (brought by the Rashi commentators)

(Dt22-01) *If you find a lost article then return and return it.*

Talmud: Be habitual in your return; even if after return the owner sloppily loses it again, return it again.

Returning to our Rashi.

Biblical text: *If you listen and listen to my commandments then I will give you rain*

Rashi: So *listen and listen* refers to a habitual listening, many times (not just once).

Continuing, we recall the Talmudic statement *When you can explain it do so otherwise simply say it is human phraseology*.

We interpret this Talmudic statement as follows:

Repeated verbs always mean habitual activity.

- *When you can interpret this habitual activity to refer to a qualitative difference do so;*
- *if not it simply means quantitative: multiple activities, similar to human phraseology.*

So in this verse - *listen and listen* - it is known that multiple listenings of learning (multiple learnings) leads to new insights and therefore the multiple listenings are reinterpreted qualitatively to refer to new and old insights.

Notice how this approach of the Rashi Newsletter is deep, mature and satisfying, always identifying the repeated verb with a grammatical category and insightfully interpreting the Talmudic statement not as arbitrary (*interpret when you can*) but as exploring for qualities related to multiple repetitions.

Meaning/Contradiction Daily Rashi Dt11-13c Dt27-09b Sat-Sun 8/16-17/14

Biblical Text: Dt11-13c If you listen to the commandments which I command you *freshly* [literally *today*] Dt27-09b Listen Jewish People: *Freshly* [literally, *today*] you had become a nation to God.

Rashi text: The word *today* means *freshly*. Here the adverb, *fresh*, is named by a good example of *freshness*, namely something that just happened *today*. The technique of naming by a good example is called *synecdoche* and is a universal method in all languages. In other words, the Hebrew *hayom*, literally, means *today*. Rashi however says that *today* can also mean *freshly* the same way that *honey* means *sweet*.

Rashi Newsletter approach: Besides bringing in the concept of figures of speech, which are universal, we have pointed out the **contradiction** in another verse, Dt27-09b between the past tense *you had become* and *today*. Rashi resolves the contradiction by broadening the meaning of *today*: It means *freshly* in Dt27-09b. Since *today* can now mean *freshly* we can apply this meaning to other places such as Dt11-13c where the verse speaks about "which I command to you *today*," to mean "which I command to you *freshly*."

Gur Aryeh: Gur Aryeh on Dt11-13c also adopts the **contradiction** approach. Moses is speaking at the end of the 40 years; how can he talk about the commandments given today?

Sifsei Chachamim, Mizrahi: They adopt the approach that the word *today* is superfluous and therefore available for purposes of exegesis.

Rashi Newsletter Approach: Besides mentioning **contradiction** we have also

used the Rashi **meaning** method; this injects taste and flavor into the Rashi. The Rashi comment is not simply because superfluous words justify exegesis (which is a bit arbitrary and tasteless) but emanates directly from meaning: Figures of speech, a universal phenomenon, justifies translating *today* as *freshly*. In other words, we have supplemented the Rashi commentators by suggesting that Rashi intended a new meaning for *today*, namely *freshly*.

Another important contribution of our newsletter is bringing in the sister verse, **Dt11-13c**, where the contradiction is more blatant.

Grammar/Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Dt11-13b Fri 8/18/14

Biblical Text:

Dt11-13b ...to love your Lord your God with all your hearts and all your lives.

Dt06-05love your Lord your God with all your heart ..and all your live

Rashi: The parallelism justifies the inference that the biblical text applies equally to the individual (singular) and community (plural).

Note how Rashi deftly combines the **parallel** and **grammar** method.

Sifsay Chacahmim, Gur Aryeh, Mizrahi: In addition to the above analysis they add the following two points (one in the name of the Ramban)

- If only the verse with singular was stated I might think it applied to the community as a whole (a common grammatical practice); If the only verse was the plural I would apply it to the community as a plurality but not to the individual. So we need two verses to apply it to the individual and community.
- Why is it that in all the Torah commands are simply stated to the community but here it is stated to the community and individual. Response: Because the full verse says *if you listen to my commandments...I will give you rain and fodder for your animals*. Normally, rain is a communal event (it never rains in just one individuals' yard). Since the reward is communal, I might think the command is also exclusively communal. Therefore we are told the command in the singular and plural.

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