

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Noach

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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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Hi. Welcome to another year of Rashiyomi. In addition to presenting the classical Rashi commentators, we will emphasize my unique contribution to the biblical understanding of Genesis, namely, that Genesis is a book about prophecy. Genesis is not about history and is not about cosmology. It is about the creation of prophecy and the

contribution of the prophets to human history.

**Paragraph Format *Daily Rashi* Thur-Mon 10/23/2014 - 10/27/2014
Gn06-22a, Gn07-05a, Gn07-09a, Gn07-02a, Gn07-13a**

Background: Recall that the world was corrupt. God was going to destroy it. He instructs Noah to build an ark. Noah complies.

Biblical Text: Gn06-13 - Gn07-16

A)

- 1) *Make an ark*
- 2) *You will come to the ark (you and your family)*
- 3) *Bring 2 of every kind, male and female*
- 4) *Bring food*

A) Noah did as God commanded [Rashi: This refers to item #1 above]

B)

- 1)
- 2) *Come to the ark*
- 3) *Bring 7 of all ritually pure animals and 2 of all non-ritually pure animals [Rashi: The use of the term ritually pure is not anachronistic; this proves that Noah studied Torah and knew the meaning of the terms]*
- 4)

B) Noah did as God commanded [Rashi: This refers to item #2 above]

C)

- 1)
- 2) *Noah came to the ark (with his family)*
- 3) *Animals came to the ark in pairs, [Rashi: This refers to item #3. Note: Animals *came* by themselves]*
- 4)

D) *Then the flood started*

1)

2) *In the middle of that very day Noah came to the ark* [**Rashi**: This refers to item #1 above. Even though people knew there would be a flood and there was motivation to kill Noah and destroy the ark, God protected them and they brazenly came into the ark in the middle of the day]

3) *And 2 of all animals came with Noah to the ark as God commanded*

Rashi Text: We have used 4 boxes to diagrammatically illustrate the derivations of the Rashi. More specifically

- Noah was commanded 4 things as shown above in several boxes which we have labeled A,B,C,D

BOX A,B: Both box #A and box #B mention that *Noah did as God commanded*. So Rashi explains

- Box #A refers to item #1 (Build an ark) while
- Box #B refers to item #2 (Come to the ark).

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: We have contributed to understanding this Rashi by classifying it as derived from the **formatting** rule. Notice how the formatting of the 4 boxes A,B,C,D clearly shows how the different boxes speak about different things

Contribution of Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi: They emphasize different parts of the formatting. For example, item #1(build an ark) is present in box A but absent in box B suggesting that box #A is devoted to building an ark while the other boxes are devoted to other things. Here are some of the things emphasized by the Rashi commentators.

- Some of the Rashi commentators emphasize the *repetition* of *Noah did as God commanded*.
- Other commentators emphasize the *4 items* commanded to Noah.
- Still other commentators emphasize the repetition of item #2 *Come to the ark* for Box #B.

These are all aspects of the formatting which we have shown holistically.

Box #D: Box #D again repeats *Noah came to the ark* but adds a phrase *In the middle of that very day*. Hence Rashi says that the point of Box #D is this emphasis *that Noah brazenly came into the ark in the middle of that very day*. It is not hard to surmise that the sinners of his generation wanted to kill him and destroy the ark but we see God's providence.

Box #C: Box #C repeats item #3 but changes the phraseology (Here we use the **parallelism** method).

- In Boxes #A and #B it says *Noah was asked to bring animals to the ark*
- In Boxes #C and #D it says *the animals came to the ark*

The **parallelism** method contrasts *bring* vs. *come*. Hence the Rashi comment: *The animals came by themselves (Noah did not have to physically bring them in)*. But what does this mean? To understand this let us carefully examine the Rashi that *Noah learned Torah*.

Rashi commentators - Gur Aryeh, Mizrahi, Sifsay Chachamim: It is easy, and the Rashi commentators all do this, to point out that the word *ritually pure* is a term that is normally associated with the Torah which was given several thousand years later. The fact that it occurs anachronistically here with the flood shows that Noah learned Torah.

The Rashi newsletter: We have emphasized in several articles (see below) that Genesis is a book about prophecy. We are all familiar with Shagal's windows: Judah is not literally a lion; he is human; but he resembles a lion; Naftali resembles a gazelle etc. We see echoed here the dramatic fire dreams of Ezekiel 1, where God communicates personality traits using animal symbolism.

We hold that many references to animals in Genesis refer to personalities.

I would suggest that references to animals in the flood story should be interpreted similarly:

- The biblical and Rashi assertion that animals sinned with each other sexually does not refer to animals (Animals do not sin!) Rather it means that people who

behaved like sheep had physical relations say with people who behaved like wolves etc. They deviated from their personalities and corrupted themselves instead of marrying within their own community.

- The statement that Noah took animals into the ark does not mean he took actual animals into the ark. Rather he took people with personalities like each of the animals. So Noah's ark had people who resembled sheep and people who resembled lions etc. We might suppose that these people had fire visions of sheeps and lions but we need not get into this; we can simply refer to their personality.
- The statement that the *animals came into the ark by themselves* does not mean that animals walked into the ark. Rather it means that these people who resembled sheep and lions had visions that God would destroy the world because of the corruption. They visited Noah who was a prophetic leader and probably had an academy where they learned prohphecy. He confirmed their prophecy that God would bring the flood and told them that he was commanded to build an ark where they could escape. Thus the statement *the animals came to Noah by themselves* means *the people resembling sheep, wolves and lions came to Noah by themselves with similar visions of God bringing a flood and Noah accepted them into the ark.*
- The reference to *pure* and *impure* animals refers to personality types. There are people like lion kings - crime bosses and warlords who live off (devour) other people and there are people like sheep and gazelles who live off grass (do not live off other people). So Noah noticed that certain personalities who lived off other people were *impure* while other personalities who did not so live were *pure*. Here the terms *pure* and *impure* refer to personality types and behavior traits. In this way Noah learned Torah values that certain types of behaviors were pure and certain types of behavior, exploiting other people, were impure.
- Finally, the verse *Noah took from the pure animals and pure birds and offered sacrifices to God* does not mean that the animals and birds were the object of sacrifice; rather they were the sacrificers. In other words, *Noah took from the people resembling pure animals (like sheep) who were on his ark and from the people resembling pure birds (that fly away from trouble and do not devour*

other creatures like owls), Noah took these people and together they offered sacrifices to God (Again: They were the offerers not the offered).

This briefly summarizes our approach. Some people may think of this as homily and fancy. But is it homily to interpret the biblical assertion *Judah is a lion* to mean that Judah's personality resembles that of a lion? Surely not! Furthermore there are numerous problems with interpreting the midrashim and verses literally (Animals do not sin like humans (Sorry!); animals do not take directives from God to go to arks; and indeed, lions alone consume about 20 sheep a day - 2 lions would require 16000 sheep for meals for a year and the ark couldn't have fit them. Rather the simple meaning of the text is as I have indicated. Please read the references below for further details.

References

Russell Jay Hendel, "*Dreams the True Religion Science Conflict*," **CCAR, The Reform Jewish Quarterly**, Winter 2012, pp111-124.

Russell Jay Hendel, "*Genesis 1 Speaks about the Creation of Prophecy, Not the Creation of the World*," **BOR HATORAH**, Vol 13E, pp 71-87.

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