

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on LechLeChaH*

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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](mailto: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.*

## **Meanings-Synonyms *Daily Rashi* Thur-Fri 10/30,31/2014 - Gn14-12a, Gn32-05a**

**Background:** During a war, Sedom and Amorah were captured and Lot who dwelled in Sedom was captured.

**Biblical Text:** Gn14-12a

*They captured Lot and his assets...he was established in Sedom.*

**Rashi Text:** What was the cause of Lot being captured? The fact that he dwelt in Sedom.

**Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:** The Rashi derivation is based on the superfluous mention of *Lot dwelling in Sedom* in the same verse indicating his capture. Indeed, we are told elsewhere that Lot dwelled in Sedom. Consequently, the extra words - *Lot dwelled in Sedom* - indicate an emphasis which in turn indicates cause: Precisely because Lot dwelled in Sedom he was captured.

**Rashi Newsletter:** Compare the verb indicating *dwelling* in the following verses

- **Gn32-05** (*Gar*) Yaakov stayed over with Laban
- **Gn14-13** (*Shochen*) They told Abraham who dwelt in the Eloney Mamrey
- **Gn14-12** (*Yoshev*) Lot was a citizen of Sedom

We use the Rashi **synonym** method. We see there are 3 verbs indicating dwelling

- Staying over
- Dwelling
- Being a citizen/ established

Our contribution, is that the Rashi comments are driven by the specific nuances of the synonyms.

- Yaakov, who married two local women, and lived for 20 years in a city, working for the the city head nevertheless said *I am staying over with Laban*. Hence the Rashi comment: *He felt uncomfortable there as if he was transient and staying over; undoubtedly this was caused by his observance of the religious laws and Laban's contrasting criminal behavior*
- The word *dwelling* is the normal term and invites no Rashi comment
- Lot didn't just dwell in Sedom. He was a citizen there. He was established. The Rashi comment has to be read with an emphasis on the specific nuances of dwell. *Precisely because he was a citizen (vs. just living or dwelling) he was captured (Since he picked up Sedom's poor habits)*

### Reference **Daily Rashi Saturday 11/1/2014 - Gn16-12a**

**Background:** God saved Hagar and promised her that her child will be like a jackal

**Biblical Text:** **Gn16-12a** *And he will be a human jackal, his hands in all and all hands in him as he will dwell by all his brethren*

**Rashi Text:** *Human jackal* means a lover of the desert and of the hunt as it says **Gn21-20** he inhabited the desert, and established himself as an archer.

**Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:** There are 5 verses where the jackal is mentioned, a creature who inhabited deserts. (As a wonderful homeschooling exercise, look up these 5 verses and verify the connection with deserts and the hunt)

**Rashi Newsletter:** Let us examine. Both Rashi and the Rashi commentators use the reference method.

- Rashi mentions another verse describing Ishmael as dwelling in the desert and participating in the hunt
- Rashi commentators link the word describing Ishmael - human jackal - with an animal type that dwells in deserts, the jackal.
- How are we to understand the two different approaches. We use the idea that we

have advocated (See the references below) that Genesis is the book of prophecy. A key idea of prophecy is the use of symbols vs. abstract overly specific scientific description. Consequently, animals are symbols representing personalities. For example, Judah is lion-like, camels are human travelers, the animals in Noah's ark were people resembling certain animal personalities. We can succinctly summarize this as follows

- Modern man describes people with adjectives
- Genesis describes people as resembling animal-types

Let us now see 3 descriptions of Ishmael (Arabs)

- Modern Man: Pejorative terms are used: wild, uncivilized (what they are not), nomadic (can't stay put) etc.
- Rashi: Lover of desert and the hunt (positive terms are used)
- Rashi commentators and Rashi newsletter: *Human jackal*. Extremely positive and picturesque. Arabs are jackal like, they love the open spaces, they are creatures with strong social connections - they care for their young and hunt in packs, they have flexible dietary needs, (berries and grass in season and small animals otherwise. )

Genesis has made significant contributions to our understanding of the personality. It has introduced the idea that personalities are not best described as a *finite* collection of adjectives; rather a superior method of describing personalities is the symbol. The virtue of the biblical approach vs the modern approach - use of animal symbols vs. adjective lists - is that the biblical approach says much more in fewer words.

Reflect about it: Do you see the difference in saying *so and so is strong, courageous, a leader* vs *so and so is lion-like*. Notice how the word *lion* has much more information than 3 adjectives. The biblical approach is superior for describing personalities using succinct symbols.

## 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.

## Grammar *Daily Rashi* Sunday 11/1/2014 - Gn16-04a

**Background:** Sarah couldn't give birth. Abraham married Sarah's servant Hagar who immediately became pregnant.

### **Biblical Text: Gn16-12a**

ID	Verse	Relations	Pregnant End Verse	Pregnant End verse	Birth
1*	Gn16-04	He had <u>relations</u> with Hagar	She became <u>pregnant</u>	<b>END VERSE</b>	
2	Gn30-04:05	He (Jacob) had <u>relations</u> with her (Bilhah)	<b>END VERSE</b>	She became <u>pregnant</u>	And gave <u>birth</u>
3	Gn38-02:03	He (Judah) had <u>relations</u> with her (his wife)	<b>END VERSE</b>	She became <u>pregnant</u>	And gave <u>birth</u>
4*	Gn38-18	He (Judah) had <u>relations</u> with her (Tamar)	She became <u>pregnant</u>	<b>END VERSE</b>	
5*	1Chronicles 1:7	He <u>related</u> with his wife	She became <u>pregnant</u>	She gave <u>birth</u>	<b>END VERSE</b>

**Rashi Text:** Hagar become pregnant from the first relationship (a rarity)

**Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:** How did Rashi know she became pregnant from the first relationship. We have 3 comments

**Sifsay Chachamim:** Gn16-04 identifies her by name Hagar; in other words it is as if she was a virgin and this was a her first relationship.

**Mizrachi:** Gn16-04 mentions *relations* and *pregnancy* indicating they happened one after the other. (Why not simply say he took her for a wife and she became pregnant)

**Gur Aryeh:** I reject the Mizrachi argument since *relations* are always mentioned

(See the above table)

**Rashi Newsletter:** Kindly review the above table. Do you see how the three verbs

- relationship
- pregnancy
- birth

are linked in the verses. Sometimes

- relationship ends the verse followed by pregnancy-birth
- relationship-pregnancy is in one verse followed by birth in the following verse.

Example #4 above uses the (relationship-pregnancy) grouping followed by (birth). This happened with a prostitute suggesting that pregnancy happened from one act of intimacy.

Rashi noted that the *grouping of verbs* dictates the activity relationship.

- If relationship and pregnancy are grouped together and separated from birth then the relationship immediately caused the pregnancy.
- On the other hand if the relationship is mentioned separately and the pregnancy birth is mentioned separately it indicates a stage of relationship which eventually led to pregnancy birth.

Hence the explanation of the Rashi comment, *she gave birth from the first relation* is based on the grouping of verbs (relations-pregnancy) followed by (birth) vs. (relations) followed by (pregnancy birth).

Some people ask "What is your authority for disagreeing with the earlier Rashi commentators?"

Good question. My answer has two parts

- First: The Rashi commentators themselves disagree as evidenced by the Gur Aryeh's disagreement with Mizrachi.
- Second: The great Malbim introduced principles on consecutive verbs (relate, pregnant, birth) and how they relate to activities. (My principle is similar to his I have somewhat modified the Malbim in my presentation but the principle is the same)

Thus I am not disagreeing *by myself* from the Rashi commentators but rather relying on the analysis of other post-Rashi commentators.

## Grammar *Daily Rashi* Monday 11/2/2014 - Gn16-01a

**Background:** Abraham was not successful in having children from his wife Sarah. Sarah suggests to Abraham marrying her maid, Hagar.

**Biblical Text:** Gn16-12a *Now Sarai Abram's wife bore him no children; and she had a maid servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing; I beg you, go in to my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.*

**Rashi Text:** Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh.

But how did Rashi derive this? Let us examine.

### **Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:**

**Sifsay Chachamim:** Everything owned by a wife is owned by her husband. So why does it say that Sarah *gave* Abraham Hagar (He already owned her). This shows that she must have had an independent status for example a royal princess

**Gur Aryeh:** The verse says *Sarah had an Egyptian maid*. But she probably had many. Also why mention her nationality? Why not say *Sarah gave Abraham her maid Hagar*. It would appear that mentioning her maid is to emphasize her royal background

**Mizrachi:** Why mention her nationality. We see here an emphasis. Apparently she was of royal blood. Rashi obtained this from the Genesis Rabbah.

**Rashi Newsletter:** As can be seen in the above citation, several verses later, Hagar is referred to as *the Egyptian*. Similarly in Gn25-12 she is referred to as Hagar *the Egyptian*.

The Rashi Grammar principle states that article, like *the*, indicate emphasis and choice. For example *the road* might indicate the national highway while *road* would indicate any road. By calling Hagar *the Egyptian*, the text indicates importance such

as royalty.

Note the subtlety in our explanation. Very often, Rashi commentators seek explanation and derivation *within the verse* Rashi is commenting on. Not so! The source for a Rashi comment very often lies in other verses not in a current verse.

The current verse simply calls her *an Egyptian maid, named Hagar*. Nothing can be derived from the *current* verse.

As indicated this is a subtlety often overlooked.

## 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

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**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*

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**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)

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**IV-PARALLELISM:** (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited

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**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.

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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.

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**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