

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on VaYayRaH

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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.

Format Daily Rashi Friday 11/7/2014 Gn18-01a

Background: Abraham had just performed circumcision. God appears to him; various messages are presented in the chapter such as i) Sarah will give birth ii) Sedom will be destroyed.

Biblical Text: Gn18-01a

- 1) God was seen by him [Abraham]; he was sitting at the tent door at noon
- 2) He lifted his eyes and saw three men standing before him
- 3) He saw and ran toward them [to invite them in]

Rashi Text: God visited Abraham because of illness following the circumcision. The purpose of God's visit was to visit the sick

Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:

Sifsay Chachamim: Rashi derives that God visited the sick from two sources
a) item #1 above says God was seen by him but no vision content is indicated
b) The verse uses a pronoun (*God was seen by him*) vs a noun (*God was seen by Abraham*). This shows that this sentence is a continuation of the preceding chapter dealing with circumcision. Hence, God came to visit Abraham account of (the sickness of the) circumcision

Gur Aryeh: Rashi derives this from a statement of vision (seen) with no content.

[Gur Aryeh raises an issue discussed by the RAAM that there is content such as the birth by Sarah or the destruction of Sedom. RAAM/Gur Aryeh responds to this point by looking at the structure of the chapter. If the intent was to discuss the destruction of Sedom then the verses later on should be up front]

Mizrachi: Two approaches are mentioned

- a) Approach #1: It is suggested that Rashi made his comment because of a vision without content
- b) But there was content, since we learn that Abraham interrupted God's

communication to invite in guests (Hence the purpose of the communication was to teach Abraham that inviting guests took precedence over prophecy)

c) Approach #2: The derivation comes from the phrase *he was sitting by the tent door at noon*. *The combination of heat (noon is hottest part of day,*

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: We combine all the comments and add a few derivations. We note the following #1) #2) and #3) above

- *Saw or seen* is mentioned 3 times (Implying 3 visions)
- The verse uses the pronoun (to him) not the noun (to Abraham)
- The other content in the chapter - birth of Sarah and destruction of Sedom are mentioned much later
- #1) mentions *sitting by the tent door; at noon*
- #2) mentions threeness (3 people)
- #3) mentions Abraham running (to help the guests)

We therefore suggest the following

- The three uses of *saw / seen* suggest a bulleted list of 3 items; 3 visions; 3 purposes
- Bullet #2 mentions 3 people; each person was a messenger delivering one prophetic message
- Bullet #3 mentions that Abraham ran to invite guests and therefore this preceded the other two messages (birth of Sarah; destruction of Sedom) mentioned much later in the chapter
- Bullet #1 mentions no content but uses the pronoun *to him vs to Abraham* linking the chapters; bullet #1 also mentions Abraham sitting at noon, which is the hottest part of the day. No further content is mentioned in bullet #1. Hence #1 is taken as a link to the previous chapter and indicates God visiting the sick

Further comments: So the three bullets are three visions each with a clear purpose

- Bullet #1 teaches us that God visits the sick
- Bullet #3 teaches us that reception of guests takes precedence over being in a prophetic state
- Bullet #2 teaches us that there were three more visions (Destruction of Sedom, birth of Sarah, and reception of guests)

Finally I add the following comment taught by the Rav (Rabbi Soloveitchick): The Rav cited Buber who taught the *I-thou* theory. The Rav illustrated

- If I visit you and do not know you then your reaction is *YEs what can I do for you*
- If I visit you and do know you your reaction might simply be *yes please come in*

In other words, after the circumcision Abraham and God were on a personal relationship level God did not need a reason to appear to Abraham. God might simply be paying a social visit.

Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Sunday 11/8/2014 - Gn18-13bs

Background: Sarah has been prophetically promised a child. Sarah scoffed at the thought she would have a child. Rashi compares a) Sarah's actual scoffing with b) God's report of the scoffing. The comparison is presented in the table below.

Biblical Text:

Gn18-12	Sarah's statement	Sarah laughed <u>inside</u> saying		After my withering I will have youth?	And my <u>husband</u> is old
Gn18-13	God's statement	Why did Sarah laugh saying	Will I indeed give birth	And I am old	[And I am old]

Rashi Text: *The Bible changed for the sake of peace.*

Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh: Rashi is basically saying that God engaged in distortion for the sake of peace. This is in fact Jewish law. The question remains where the distortion happened

Gur Aryeh: The text didn't actually lie for the sake of peace; rather it *omitted* for the sake of peace. Sarah mentioned her old age (after my withering) and her husband's old age; but God only paraphrased this as a complaint about her old age.

In other words, according to Gur Aryeh one is not allowed to outright lie for the

sake of peace; one however is allowed to omit information for the sake of peace.

In this case, God citing Sarah as saying that her husband is old might be insulting to Abraham.

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: We have contributed the tabular visual presentation in the table above. It enables several things

- One can see the difference between "My husband is old" and "I am old"
- One can also see the extra phrase "Will I indeed give birth". We can interpret this extra phrase as follows: Sarah looked at form (age) while God reformulated this in terms function (capacity to give birth). This is in fact a modern American perspective: One should not for example reject someone for a job based on factors of form but rather on factors of capacity. Thus American law is also sensitive to the peacefulness of an emphasis on function vs. form.
- There are other differences above (This frequently happens when one explores parallel structure; one uncovers things Rashi did not mention). In this case, the Bible emphasizes that Sarah laughed inwardly (I guess in her mind rather than out loud). Yet God omits the word inwardly when speaking to Abraham. I find it strange that no one comments on this.

Comments: There are many other thoughts brought down (Too lengthy for our newsletter). For example the sifsay chachamim mentions that Sarah had started to spot while the angels are talking. Sifsay chachamim then explains the verse "After my withering I will have youth (Childbirth)" to mean that the spotting was not one time but her full period resumed (Sifsay chachamim explains that that is why the childbirth would happen in a year vs 9 months; 3 months to establish a period and 9 months of labor (cited from the Shadal)

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

Background: We compare two verses speaking about listening to someone

Biblical Text: Gn21-12a

Gn21-12a God speaking to Abraham: listen to Sarah's voice

Gn 39-10 A description of Joseph refusing his master's wife advances: Didn't listen to her

Rashi Text: This proves that Sarah was superior to Abraham in prophecy. The phrase *don't listen to her voice* means *don't listen to her prophetic orders*.

Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh: The commentators all distinguish between the phrases *listen to someone* and *listen to someone's voice*.

- The phrase *listening to a voice* refers to obeying a prophetic order told in a vision;
- The phrase *listening to a person* refers to listening to an actual order.

Note: The Sifsay chachamim does (like the Rashi newsletter) bring parallel verses. The sifsay chachamim cites *If you listen to my commandments*

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: We have contributed the parallel phrase analysis presented above. Note that there are really three types of verses with listen: i) *listen to a voice* ii) *listen to someone* iii) *listen to content*. The verse cited by Sifsay chachamim, *listen to my commandments* which mentions listening to a specific item is not really parallel to a verse discussing listening to someone.

For that reason we have brought to verses discussing listening to someone in our table above. Clearly Potiphar's wife (who wanted an affair) was not a prophet. The verse says *Joseph did not listen to her*. Contrastively, Sarah was a prophet and the verse says *Abraham did not listen to her voice*. So the two examples both illustrate listening to a person.

Rashi is then understood as saying that *listen to someone* refers to spoken requests while *listening to someone's voice* refers listening to a communication through a dream.

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