

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on ToLeDoTh

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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.

Grammar Daily Rashi Thursday-Friday 11/20-21/2014 Gn28-01ab

Background: Isaac instructs Jacob to flee *to* the place Padan Aram *to* the house of Laban, his brother-in-law. Isaac so instructed Jacob to flee since Esau wanted to kill him.

Biblical Text: Gn25-08 *Get up and go to Padan Aram to the house of Laban*

Rashi Text: There are always two methods in Hebrew to indicate *to*.

- Prefix the word *to* (Examples: to-Padam-Aram; to-Laban's house)
- Suffix the word with a *hey* (hey): (Examples: go PadanH-Aram, houseH of Laban)

Note: The actual Biblical text does not use *to*; rather the actual Biblical text uses the terminal *hey*. Please open the Hebrew text and confirm this. It is interesting what the traditional Rashi commentators do with this Rashi.

Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:

Sifsay Chachamim: Rashi says *you can always use a suffix H instead of a prefix to*. But that is not true. The rule that Rashi states only applies to *places*.

Gur Aryeh: Rashi says *you can always use a suffix H instead of a prefix to*. But that is not true. The rule that Rashi states only applies to *places*.

Examples:

- If you are going to Israel you can say *I am going IsraelH*
- But if you are going to your friend say Joe, you do not say *I am going JoeH*.

Mizrachi: The Rashi rule is stated in both the Babylonian Talmud, Yevamoth, as well as in the Genesis Rabbah.

These sources raise the following verse, Psalm 9:18, as an objection: *May the wicked return to-HellH*. If *to* and *H* are alternate methods for indicating direction

how can the Bible use both. The sources respond: *There is an upper and lower division of Hell. So to-HellH indicates that the wicked first go to-Hell and once there in the upper level they go HellH to the lower level.*

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: We are not adding anything to the traditional Rashi commentators. Note the progression of the commentators just listed.

- Sifsay Chachamim simply observes that Rashi's rule has to be modified.
- Gur Aryeh goes a step further: He gives specific counterexamples where the rule would not apply
- Mizrachi makes two further contributions: a) Mizrachi states the sources from which Rashi derived the rule; b) Mizrachi also brings to our attention the unusual Psalm 9:18.

Finally, we point out that all three commentators think it appropriate to *amend* Rashi's statement of the rule based on biblical examples which show that the rule only applies to places not to people.

This establishes an important precedent. One has the right, perhaps the obligation, to amend Rashi rules, if biblical examples support the emendation. One can amend Rashi even though Rashi does not explicitly state the restrictive criteria supported by the examples. So in this example, even though Rashi states *all verses where there should be a prefix to there can be instead a suffix H*, nevertheless he didn't really mean *all*. It is important therefore, when reading Rashi, to check biblical examples and *fill-in* any missing items in the Rashi.

Contradiction *Daily Rashi* Saturday 11/22/2014 Gn26-17a

Background: Isaac moved to Gerar. He amassed much wealth. The King of Gerar asked him to move. Isaac moved to the Gerar River.

Biblical Text:

- **Gn26-01:17** *Isaac dwelled in Grar*
- *Avimelech [King of Gerar] said: "Go from us since you have amassed so much*

wealth"

- *Isaac moved to the Gerar River*

Rashi Text: Far from the city.

Rashi Newsletter Contribution:

We classify this as a **contradiction**.

- On the one hand, Isaac was order to leave Gerar
- On the other hand, Isaac moved to the Gerar River.

Did he leave Gerar or did he stay in Gerar? Rashi resolves the **contradiction** by explaining *Isaac moved to the Gerar river which was far from the city* [So indeed he moved from city to the river used by the city but was far away from the city]

Rashi commentators - Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh:

- Mizrachi: [How did Rashi know that Gerar river was far from the city] Because if it was near the city, then the Gerar King would banish him again. [Why was it called Gerar river if it was far from the city?] It was called Gerar river because it passes through it [But its source was distant]
- Sifsay chachamim, Gur Aryeh: Since King Gerar ordered him out of the city, Isaac presumably went far away.
- Rashi Newsletter: Our contribution is to explicitly identify the Rashi method as **contradiction**, a **contradiction** between Gerar River and Gerar.
- Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Rabbi Hirsch makes the interesting point that Isaac, in the process of becoming wealthy, made many friends in the city. He didn't want to fully leave them but his presence in the city was overbearing. So Isaac move to the Gerar river which was distant from the city. He was no longer seen in the city every day and therefore was no longer overburdening. Contrastively, the river was a water supply and therefore his old friends would come down there now and then. In this way, Isaac moved away from the city but retained his ties there.

Parallelism Daily Rashi Sunday,Monday 11/23,24/2014 - Gn27-19a,22a

Background: Isaac wanted to bless Esauv his firstborn prior to his death. Rivkah, Isaac's wife, convinces Jacob to pretend to be Esauv so as to steal the blessings (As the Rashi commentators point out, Isaac's and Esauv's voices were similar (perhaps because they were twins); Isaac was also blind; so Isaac was limited in recognition of Jacob vs Esauv). Isaac wants to make sure he is blessing the right son. What ensues is some questions from Isaac to his sons as well as comments on their style. We cite these dialogues in the form of tables exhibiting the parallel structure.

Biblical verses:

| | | | | |
|------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Gn27-19:20 | Isaac to Jacob | Who are you? | It is me | Esauv the First born |
| Gn27-24 | Isaac to Jacob | Are you Esauv? | It is me | |
| Gn27-32 | Isaac to Esauv | Who are you? | I am Esauv your son | The First born |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Gn27-19 Jacob | Please | Get up | I wish you to come to the table | I wish you to Eat | From my | Venison | In other that your soul bless me |
| Gn27-31 Esauv | | Get up father | | Eat | From his | Son's venison | In order that your soul bless me |

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter contributes, over the Rashi commentators, studying this Rashi, using the **parallelism** rule. The differences in the above table are too many but we can summarize them with one theme noted by Rashi: *Jacob speaks in a supplicatory or soft style*. The reader should specifically note *each* difference and in the above tables and see how it fits in.

Examples: Look at the 2nd table above: Jacob is soft in his speech. He uses *please, I wish*; Esauv is confrontational and constantly emphasizes the father-son relationship: *Get up father; from his son's venison*. Note also the difference between Jacob (*from my venison*) and Esauv (*from his son's venison*). Esauv uses a 3rd person to refer to himself.

Now let us look at the 1st table: When Isaac asks are you Esauv, Jacob replies

softly, *it is me*. Contrastively, Esauv replies to his father confrontationally: *I am Esauv, your son*.

With this background we can interpret the Rashi comments

- **Gn27-19:** Rashi reads this non-confrontationally *It is me, Esauv the firstborn*. Rashi infers this from the contrast with Esauv who says *I am Esauv your son, the firstborn*. According to the Rashi Newsletter, Rashi's contribution is to place the comma after *me* in *It is me, Esauv the firstborn*.
- **Gn27-22** Rashi notes that *Jacob speaks in a supplicatory manner* which we have gone over above.

In summary, the approach we have taken is based on the **parallelism**. The key point of the parallelism is Jacob's softer non-confrontational approach. Now let us see what the Rashi commentators say

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi: They interpret the Rashi reading, *It is me, Esauv the Firstborn* as an attempt to avoid lying. So it reads, *it is me* (true), and then *Esauv is the firstborn*.

This is certainly stretched. The **Rashi newsletter** interpreted the Rashi reading, *It is me, Esauv the firstborn*, as referring to a softer non-confrontational approach which is justified by the comparisons of the two tables. Note, Rashi himself never said that Jacob tried to avoid lying. But Rashi did say at Gn27-22 that Jacob was supplicatory in his speech.

The 3 Rashi commentators give very little detail of why Jacob was soft spoken (the contrast of Jacob's *please get up* vs. *Esauv's get up father* is mentioned at one point by one of them)

Summary: The Rashi commentators take the Rashis as making *two* points: Jacob didn't lie and he spoke softly (There is also a *3rd* point not discussed by us though it is in the verses, that *Jacob mentioned God while Esauv rarely mentioned God*).

The approach of the Rashi newsletter is that there is *one* theme: soft supplicatory speech. This is recognized by several verbal cues *please, I wish, repast-eat, lack of emphasis on father-son (Its me vs Its Esauv)*.

We also believe that the **parallelism** tables exhibited above are the best way to understand and derive the Rashi comments. The interested reader is again invited to list all differences and see how they related to the basic theme, supplicatory.

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