

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

### *Their presence in Rashis on BoH*

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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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**Meaning *Daily Rashi* Thur, Fri 1/22/-23/15 Ex11-02a Ex12-09a**

**Biblical Text: Ex11-02a**

[And God said to Moses] *Please* (Na) *Speak to the nation : Let them lend , men from their friends and women from their friends, silver vessels, gold vessels and clothes.*

**Rashi Text:** The Hebrew word *Na* only means *please*.

**Biblical Text: Ex11-09a**

[Talking about the Passover lamb sacrifice] *Don't eat it partially roasted* (Na).

**Rashi Text:** The Hebrew word *Na* in Arabic means partially roasted.

**Mizrachi, Rashi commentator:** Rashi means on **Ex11-02a** that *the word Na used here only means please.*

Similarly when the Mechiltah on **Ex11-09a** states that *The Hebrew word Na only means partially roasted*, it means that *The Hebrew word Na on **Ex11-09a** only means partially roasted.*

Mizrachi then gives several other examples of Midrashim of the form *This Hebrew word only means such and such* when in fact that Hebrew word can have several meanings. Mizrachi argues that the Midrashic style *this Hebrew word only means such and such* means *this Hebrew word here, in this verse, only means such and such*

**Rashi NewsLetter Approach:** This is an important **Mizrachi**

since it shows that the Midrashic-Rashi language *The word X only means Y* does not mean that X can't have two meanings!! In other words, if you find counterexamples to a Rashi meaning you do not have the right to accuse Rashi of being Midrashic and you also don't have to feel guilty about asserting that the given word has multiple meanings.

A favorite enjoyable technique of the **Rashi Newsletter** is the **unified meaning** approach. Let us illustrate here. Rashi says

- Na can mean *please*
- Na can mean *partially roasted*.

We can unify these two meanings using the English metaphor of *buttering someone up* or *warming someone up prior to a request*.

In other words, the person who says *please* is not barging in and asking *raw* for a request; rather, they are *warming* the person up, partially buttering them up, so when the request comes it will be more *palatable*. It follows that *na* can refer

- to food, making it partially edible by roasting, or
- to requests, making a request more palatable.

The **Rashi NewsLetter** only deals with the skill competencies needed to understand Rashi. But Rashi is vast with many other avenues of exploration.

**Sifsay Chachamim, Rashi commentator:** Sifsay Chachamim deals with the following question *How did God make the Jews graceful so that the Egyptians would loan them vessels. The biblical verse explicitly says God made the Jews graceful to the*

Egyptians.

The **Sifsay Chachamim** explains: *God brought the plague of darkness when the Egyptians couldn't see anything for 3 days. That meant that the Jews could have stolen things and not gotten caught. Since they did not steal anything, they achieved respect and grace in the Egyptian eyes. They established themselves as honest slaves and therefore the Egyptians did not mind loaning them the utensils.*

**Gur Aryeh, Rashi commentator:** Why did God have to tell them to borrow material wealth, something that was for their own good?

The **Gur Aryeh** explains: Because, if God hadn't told them to loan, they might argue that since it is for their own benefit they have the right to forgo it. Therefore God both advised them to loan and said *please* to indicate that it was for their benefit.

Rashi also adds that it was for the benefit of the Patriarchs. God had promised Abraham i) your descendants will be sojourners and ii) they will leave the land with great wealth. God in effect said to the Jews, item i) was fulfilled; it is proper for you to fulfill item ii).

**Meaning Daily Rashi Sat-Mon 1/24-26/2015 Ex10-07a Ex09-30a, Gn02-05a**

Note: This Rashi was done last week. However, the same Hebrew word which means *not yet* occurs in this weeks Parshah. So we review it. As explained last week, this is an example

where the Rashi commenters fully explain the Rashi text and the **Rashi Newsletter** does not add anything.

### **Biblical Texts:**

#### **Ex10-07a**

[Background: Moses had come to Pharaoh and asked to let the Jewish people go lest more plagues come] *Pharaoh's staff said to him, How long will this be a stumbling block for us, let the people go and worship their God, do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?*

#### **Ex09-30a**

[Background: Moses had promised to remove a plague in exchange for which Pharaoh said he would let the people go. Moses promises to remove the plague. But continues...] As for you and your staff, I know, you are not yet in fear of God

#### **Gn02-05a**

All field shrubbery was not yet in the land and all field grass had not yet sprouted because God had not sent any rain ...

**Rashi Text**: The biblical word *terem* means *not yet*. [We have inserted the Rashi translation in the verse citation above]

**Mizrachi, Rashi commentator**: On **Ex09-30a**, Mizrachi explains that *Rashi explains that terem means not yet and does not mean prior. Rashi does not explain his reasons here because he relies on what he said in **Gn02-05a**.*

Let us now explore the Rashi commentators on **Gn02-05a**.

## **Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh, Rashi**

**commentators:** In other words, *terem* is translated as two words, *not yet*.

It is incorrect to translate it as *prior*. There are two reasons for this.

- *Prior* can be conjugated as a verb. e.g. *Prior to it raining there was no shrubbery*. However although the Hebrew word for *prior*, *Kodem*, has verb forms, (e.g. *hikdim*), the Hebrew word *terem*, has no conjugation.
- If *Terem* meant *prior*, then the verse would not make sense. It would read *Prior to field grass sprouting, because God had not sent rain.* On the other hand the translation *not yet*, makes sense: *Field grass had not yet sprouted, because God had not sent rain.* In other words, the word *because* forces the translation *not yet* instead of *prior*.

**Comment:** Further comments are made in the Rashi commentators about the tense of the verb that follows *not yet*. In English we say

- All shrubbery was not yet in the land (Past tense)
- Do you not yet know that Egypt is gone (Present tense)
- You do not yet fear God (Present tense)

In Hebrew the future conjugation is used. The Rashi commentators explain that when the future conjugation is combined with not yet it has a meaning of the present.

Some readers may be surprised that Hebrew would use a future conjugation to mean the present. However unlike English which has about a dozen verb conjugations (e.g. *had feared, feared,*

*fear, will fear, fearing, etc)* Hebrew has only two basic conjugations, Present and Future. These two conjugations have multiple functions and can sometimes *mean* activity different than the conjugation. The use of a future Hebrew conjugation to mean the present happens in several contexts. The Rashi commentators are simply telling us *how to write* the text which means *not yet ....* We write the text with a *future* conjugation even though its meaning is *present*.

### **Grammar *Daily Rashi* Tue 1/27/2015 Ex10-22b**

Note: This is an example where the Rashi commenators fully explain the underlying reason for the Rashi comment.

#### **Biblical Texts:**

##### **Ex10-22b**

[Background: Plague of darkness] *They didn't see each other nor were they able to get up for a triplet of days but all the Jews had light in their dwellings.*

**Rashi Text**: The Hebrew text *shlosheth yamim* does not mean *three days* but a *triplet of days*.

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

- The Hebrew word for *three* is *Sheloshah*
  - The Hebrew word for triplet is *shelosheth*
- The terminal *th* in *shelosheth*, indicates the construct state. In other words it means a "three of days" or a "triplet of days".

**Rashi NewsLetter Contribution**: What is the meaning

significance of *three* vs *triplet*? We would suggest

- *Three* could refer to 3 non-consecutive days
- *Triplet* refers to 3 consecutive days.

In other words, the punishment was more severe. If the 3 days were non-consecutive, the Egyptians could get up each time, and recover before the next day of darkness. However, the 3 days of darkness were consecutive indicating a more intense punishment.

## 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