

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on BeShaLaCh
Vol 23#4 - Adapted from Rashi-is-Simple

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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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GRAMMAR Daily Rashi Fri 1/30/15 Ex13-17a

Note: This is a good example where the Rashi commentators use the same rules as in the Rashi Newsletter. However the Rashi Newsletter still adds something.

Biblical Text: Ex13-17a

[Background: The Jews are finally leaving the Egyptians who enslaved them] *When Pharoh let the people go, God did not lead them through the Phillistine route ..*

Rashi Text: The Hebrew word *NaCham* means lead them

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi

commentators: There are two ways to interpret the 3 Hebrew letters, **Nun-Cheth-Mem**, *nacham*

- The three letters are a biblical root. *Nacham* means *comforted*. The verse would mean *When Pharoh let the people go God did not comfort with the Philistine route*
- The terminal **Mem** is a suffix letter; the **Nun-Cheth** is the root. **Nun Cheth** means to rest. It can also mean a *slow-paced-restful walk* (See Psalm 23 for such an example). **Mem** as a suffix letter refers to the plural object, *them*. So the three letters **Nun-Cheth-Mem** means *When Pharoh let the people go, God did not restfully walk them by the Phillistine route*
Rashi retranslates the picturesque *restfully walk them* as *guide them*

Rashi Newsletter contribution: The Rashi Newsletter adds

- An explicit identification of the rule as the **Grammar** rule.
- An identification that Rashi explains Grammar whenever a word has two possible interpretations.

This is a novelty of the Rashi newsletter. The traditional method of teaching grammar in day schools is to ask students to memorize the grammar tables and then fill in sentences with the correct conjugation. From a pedagogic point of view this uses **memorization** and **fill-in**. The Rashi Newsletter, following Rashi, requires **executive function** problems that address two areas of the brain. In these Rashis, Rashi takes a form, like *nacham*, that can be interpreted using two different grammar rules, biblical root and suffix mem. Such exercises greatly strengthen the student and enhance the pedagogic experience.

Meaning *Daily Rashi* Sat 1/31/2015 Ex16-33a

Biblical Texts:

Ex16-33a

[Background: The Jews were fed by the miraculous manna] *And Moses said to Aaron: Take one thermos and place there a full gallon of manna, and rest it before God, guarded for generations.*

Rashi Text: The Hebrew word *tzintzeneth* means *thermos*.

Gur Aryeh, Rashi commentator: Why else would the root *tzin* be doubled *tzin-tzin-eth*. The Hebrew word *tzinah* means cold. So the word *tzin-tzin-eth* would mean *cold preserving*, ergo, a *thermos*. And proof that the doubling is what motivated Rashi to exegetically understand the name in terms of its root comes from the Talmudic passage in Gittin where they exegetically derive several repeat-root words.

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: First, The Rashi Newsletter

makes the contribution of explicit identification of the **meaning rule**. Furthermore, the **meaning** rule has 10 subrules! One of the subrules is the **root** rule, explaining words by their roots.

However, we disagree with the Gur Aryeh. Rashi, besides explaining double roots will sometimes explain single roots. Why then did the Gemarrah in Gittin only explain double roots? Because that day, someone was examining some double root words and wanted to give several examples. Surely the Gur Aryeh knows many midrashic passages where a word's meaning is derived from a single root.

In summary, Rashi explains word meanings and does so with roots. Rashi can use both repeated and single roots.

Meaning *Daily Rashi* Sun 2/1/2015 Ex13-14b

Biblical Texts:

Ex13-14b

[Background: The Jews had just left their enslavement in Egypt] *God said to Moses to say over: Speak to the Jews and let them return and camp by Free-Mouth... So that Pharoh will say [aha] they couldn't escape, they are closed in....and I will harden Pharoh's heart and he will pursue them....*

Rashi Text: *Free-Mouth* is also called *Closed-Mouth*. It is called *Free-Mouth* because the Jews became Free there. It consisted of two tall stones and the valley between them is called the *stone-mouth*.

Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi

commentator: There were two stones. They were closed on bottom and had a hole through them. The hole resembled a mouth. Hence the name *closed-mouth*. The name *free-mouth* refers to the fact that the Jews were freed there.

The Egyptians used witchcraft against their slaves. No slave had ever climbed through *closed-mouth* and escaped alive. But God annulled the witchcraft and the Jews went through there. When they came back Pharaoh saw it as a sign of weakness.

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter makes 4 contributions here.

First: We use the **meaning** method. Words made up of two words are etymologically understood in terms of those two words. Hence we have the etymologies

- *Closed-mouth*, referring to the form, how it looked
- *Free-mouth*, referring to the function, what it effected

Once we have such names it is not hard to imagine that they refer to rock formations that look like a mouth.

Second: The Rashi Newsletter, following the Ralbag, deeply believes, that all supernatural phenomena have scientific basis. What is witchcraft? And how does God annul it?

Witchcraft is a fancy word for abuse. Slaves were abused. They were never allowed to complete a project. As they were about to complete a project the master came in and sabotaged it. The result of this abuse is that the slaves started losing their capacity for project completion. They also lost their physical self-esteem.

They started falling and dropping things.

So there were no guards or patrol units by *closed-mouth*. An ordinary person could climb through without falling. But a slave would fall and injure themselves on the rocks. So in this case, witchcraft simply refers to organized abuse which naturally lead to slave inability.

How did God annul it? Through prophetic visions. The prophetic visions restored self-esteem to the Jews who now had the courage to do the things they couldn't do before. The vision came them the belief that they could climb through *closed-mouth*.

Third: Are the etymologies grounded in anything else besides the two words. The Rashi Newsletter seeks multiple confirmations. Also why should we assume that *closed-mouth* and *free-mouth* were the same place. There is no Scriptural basis for it.

If you look at the juxtaposition and text of the verses we have two supportive proofs

- The verse says that by the Jews returning to free-mouth Pharaoh would think they were confused and closed in. [This supports the idea that a *spell* [=abuse] had been cast on the slaves so that no one could climb the rocks; although the Jews did climb through they were so frightened they returned]
- The verses speaks about the Jews *returning*. But we know (**Ex1** and **Nu33**) that the Jews were enslaved in the cities of Raamsayth and *closed-mouth*. So it seems logical that they returned to those cities.

In summary, we are told

- The Jews *returned*
- The return caused Pharaoh to think that he had won
- We are given the names of two letter words, meaning, *free-mouth* and *closed-mouth*

One very reasonable way of combining these themes is to assume that the Jews worked near *closed-mouth* which through continual abuse was inescapable because they could not complete the climb. God annulled the fear of success through a prophetic vision and the Jews escaped *closed-mouth*. But God ordered them back to lure the Egyptians to their downfall.

Fourth: Whenever analyzing Rashi we like to add embellishment which however are not necessarily provable. In this case Rashi suggests that *closed-mouth* had a name change to *free-mouth* after the Jews went through it. Perhaps! I would like to suggest that the city always had two names: *Free-mouth* and closed-mouth. Some masters would say "We placed a spell on you; if you try to escape you will fall and die" while other masters would say "You can get free by climbing through *free-mouth*" In other words there were two ways of teasing the Jews slaves.

In summary, Rashi explains word meanings and does so with roots. Rashi can use both repeated and single roots.

Style *Daily Rashi* Mon, Tue 2/2,3/2015 Ex16-25a,26a

Biblical Texts: Ex16-25:26

[Background: God gave the Jews manna but none descended on Saturday]

- (A) *Because* Today is Sabbath to God, Today you will not find manna in the field
- (B)----- Six days you will collect manna
- (A) But on the 7th is a Sabbath; there will be none in it

Rashi Text: Although Manna stopped today there will continue to be manna on the 6 weekdays. The 3rd bullet implies that there will be no manna on the festivals or Yom Kippur.

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Rashi commentator: Note the repetition of the 1st and 3rd bullet. Rashi derives his comments about Yom Tov and Yom Kippur from the repetition. The repetition must imply something else.

If you look at **Gn02-01:04** there is mention that *only it* [the Sabbath] *is sanctified*. Rashi explains there, *sanctified with no manna*. Thus the principle day of no manna is Sabbath. However, per **Lv23**, both the festivals and Yom Kippur are called Sabbaths. So although the strict meaning of Sabbath, is the 7th day, it can also refer to festivals and Yom Kippur.

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter makes the contribution of the **Style** rules (also known as the Rabbi Ishmael rules).

Do you notice that the 3 bullets of the biblical text have an ABA form? We can call this a **general-detail-general** form. Both **General** verses imply that there is no manna on the Sabbath. The **detail** verse explains that nevertheless there is manna every weekday.

Rabbi Ishmael interprets a **general-detail-general** rule the same way we interpret a paragraph. The theme sentence, *no manna*, is generalized by the paragraph details. The paragraphs shows that no manna on the Sabbath is in contrast to manna on workdays. It immediately follows, that on Festivals and Yom Kippur when work is prohibited there is also no Manna.

The repetition by itself would not justify inference. It is rather the repetition in a specific form: **General-detail-general**, that justifies it.

The idea of comparing the Rabbi Ishmael form to the modern paragraph was first make by me in my article, **Biblical Formatting, Jewish Bible Quarterly**,35(1), pp 17-27.

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