

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on YiThRo
Vol 23#5 - 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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Meaning-Synonym *Daily Rashi* Thur Feb 5 2015 Ex18-18a

Biblical Text: Ex19-18a

[Background: Jehthro, Moses father-in-law has just heard all the miracles God did for Israel] *Jehthro had goose-pimples on all the good that God did to Israel*

Rashi Text: The Hebrew word, *VaYiChaD*, means *he became sharp* [goose pimples]

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi

commentators: Rashi learns this since the usual phrase is *Jethro Rejoiced* [Vayismach].

Rashi Newsletter contribution: The Rashi Newsletter contributes an explicit identification of rules

- The idea of comparing *Jethro rejoiced* with *Jethro had goose pimple*, uses the powerful **Parallelism** method.
- The idea of two words meaning *rejoice, happy* and *goose pimples* is the **Synonym** method.

Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Fri 2/6/2015 Ex18-11a

Biblical Texts:

Ex19-11a

[Background: Jethro had just heard all the great miracles God did for Israel] *Now I know that God is greater than all gods*

Rashi Text: This verse teaches that Jethro had served all idols.

Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim, Rashi

commentators: Rashi learns this by a **parallel** comparison of the following two verses

- **Ex19-11a** Now I know that God is greater than all gods
- **Ps133-05** I know that God our Lord is greater than all gods

The Psalm verse indicates knowledge in the sense of belief. Contrastively, the use of the word *now* indicates knowledge that is derived at a certain point of time instead of a preexisting belief.

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: This is one of the instances in which the Rashi Newsletter learned of the Rashi explanation from the Rashi commentators.

The Rashi Newsletter developed the 10 basic Rashi principles by examining pristine explanations of difficult Rashis by the Rashi commentator masters and then generalizing the applicability of these principles.

Grammar *Daily Rashi* Sat-Sun 2/7,8/2015 Ex18-15a/16b

Biblical Texts:

Ex19-15:16 *When people will come to me to seek God's [advise]: When they will have an issue they came to me and I told them the statutes of God and his Torah.*

Rashi Text: *When people come to me to seek God's [advise]: When they have an issue they come to me and I tell them the statutes of God and his Torah.*

Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi

commentator: Rashi did not interpret will have because

- He was explaining why he was sitting in court all day now (and if they will have an issue why should he be sitting now)
- If you interpret *they will have an issue they came to me* literally it sounds like a one-time event (they have one issue and come to me). But the intent of the verse is a habitual action (whenever they have an issue they come to me)

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: The Rashi newsletter contributes classification of this Rashi as a Grammar rule. Furthermore, by borrowing from the Grammar of other cultures we get insight into what Rashi is doing. Compare the following sentences

- Past: I drank water
- Present: I am drinking water
- Future: I will drink water
- Conditional Habitual Present: When I am thirsty, I drink water

English Grammar introduces the idea of the conditional habitual present. The conditional habitual present

- Does not indicate necessarily *any* drinking of water
- Does not indicate a one-time drinking (did drink, am drinking, will drink) since the person *usually drinks when thirsty*
- Does not indicate cause-effect; the person does not *always* drink when thirsty.

Armed with these comments we can better understand Rashi. Rashi is explaining that the future and past conjugations which

usually mean past and future, in this verse indicate a conditional habitual present. In other words, the Hebrew language `is creating a *conditional habitual present* using atypical interpretations of the *future* and *past* conjugation.

Comment: Notice how

- The Rashi commentators concentrate on possible literal interpretations (*if the future was literal then why was Moses sitting in court now*).
- The Rashi Newsletter concentrates on broad categories of interpretation.

Acknowledgement: I am indebted to my sister for useful conversations deepening my understanding of this Rashi.

Grammar - Reference *Daily Rashi* Mon 2/9/2015 Ex18-27a

Biblical Texts: Ex18-27a

Jethro went, for himself, to his land

Rashi Text: *Jethro went for personal reasons to his land. He went with the intent of converting people to Judaism.*

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Rashi commentator: Rashi comes from the Mechiltah. The Mechiltah continues: *Perhaps he went to convert but did not do so? There are several verses showing that he succeeded*

- **(Judges 1:16)** *And the descendants of Keini, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the city of palm trees with the sons of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the south of Arad; and they went and lived among the people.*

- (1Ch 2:55) *And the families of the scribes who lived in Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites who came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.*

The Keinites of course refer to the descendants (and disciples) of Jethro the Kenite.

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter makes the contribution that the Mechiltah (on which Rashi is based) is using the **Reference Method**.

But what is the source of Rashi. The Rashi Newsletter makes a contribution of the following **Grammar rule**. *The pronomial indirect object for him or for himself indicates for personal reasons.* In fact there are about a dozen Rashis where the pronomial indirect object, for him, is interpreted as meaning for personal reasons.

Since Jethro is said to have gone home for personal reasons, Rashi interprets this to mean that he advocated what he learned about the Jewish God and he decided to establish a following of people who worshipped God.

Acknowledgement: I am indebted to my brother for encouraging me to critically examine this Rashi and defend it.

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