

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on MishPaTiM
Vol 23#6 - 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-Idiom Daily Rashi Thur Feb 12 2015 Ex21-21a

Biblical Text: Ex21-21a

[Background: A master who smites a slave does receive a death penalty] But if the slave survives a day or two the master does not get a death penalty

Rashi Text: *Day or two* means a 24 hour period. A 24 hour period resembles one or two days.

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi

commentators: Because a 24 hour period

- Resembles a day in that it is 24 hours
- Resembles two days because it typically overlaps with 2 days

Rashi Newsletter contribution: The Rashi Newsletter contributes an explicit identification of rules. Rashi is using the **idiom** method. An **idiom** is a group of words whose meaning transcends the meaning of the individual words. Here Rashi is not making a homily on *day or two* but explaining that *day or two* is an idiomatic phrase referring to a 24 hour period.

Why then does Rashi explain *it* [the 24 hour period] *resembles both a day and 2 days*? Rashi is not making a homily on the phrase; rather Rashi is explaining how the **idiom** evolved. But Rashi's main point is that *day or two* is an **idiom**. In other words, Rashi is reporting a dictionary entry and is giving the simple meaning of the text.

Contradiction *Daily Rashi* Fri 2/13/2015 Ex23-20a

Biblical Texts:

Ex23-20a

[Background: God speaking to Israel around the time of the Decalogue] *Behold: I am sending an angel to guard you in the journey.*

Rashi Text: The verse informs them that the people will sin and God will no longer lead the people but rather an angel will.

Ramban, who occasionally comments on Rashi: Compare the following verses

- [God after the golden calf] **Ex33-03** *For I [God] will no longer go amongst you*
- [God speaking to the Jews after Moses prayed for forgiveness] **Ex33-14** *My face will walk with you and give you rest*
- **Jo05-14** [Vision of Joshua after passing the Jordan into Israel and was speaking to an angel] I am a prince of God, I have come now

We interpret these verses as follows

- Because of the Jews' sins, it was decreed that an angel, not God, lead them
- But Moses prayed and overrode the angel accompaniment. God rescinded and agreed to personally accompany them
- But in the time of Joshua, God no longer accompanied them but rather an angel (Hence the Joshua text, *I have come now* indicating that before God was leading them but now an angel will)

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: The Rashi NewsLetter makes several contributions.

- The Ramban explains Rashi as commenting on the

contradictions - *I will not go with you; My face will go with you.* This is the **contradiction** method. The contradiction is resolved through the parameter of sin: If the Jews sin, the angel will lead them, if not God will lead them.

- The Rashi Newsletter introduced the idea of the *illustrative example*: Rashi is not interpreting the verse that the Jews will definitely sin, since that is too specific and contradicts the idea of free will. Rather, Rashi is using the golden calf as an *illustrative example* of the more *general* idea that

if the Jews sin then they will be protected, but protected by an angel, not by God.

if the Jews do not sin then they will be personally protected by God.

This makes enormous sense since the entire paragraph that this verse introduces speaks about how God will assist the Jews in conquering the Canaanites. In a certain sense Rashi is interpreting this verse as *I will always protect you even if you sin but if you sin I will protect you by an angel.*

To recap: Rashi took this verse and by using several examples in other verses interpreted the verse as contrastive: God will send an angel, not Himself, to guide you. This opening theme is consistent with the rest of the paragraph and with *several* future episodes such as the Golden calf which Rashi seems to quote but also the incident of Joshua which the Ramban cites.

Meaning *Daily Rashi* Sat 2/14/2015 Ex24-08b

Biblical Texts:

Ex24-08b

[Background: Moses was offering the sacrifice of covenant]
Moses took the blood and threw it on the nation

Rashi Text: *Threw here means sprinkled.*

Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi

commentator: **Ez36-25** states *I will throw on you pure waters and purify you.* [Here also *throw* means *sprinkled*]

Rashi NewsLetter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter makes the contribution of paradigms of meaning in several languages. *Hyponymy* refers to items subordinate to a general category. In this case *throw, sprinkle, spit, spray* are *hyponyms* of general causation of motion. *Hyponymic* transfer indicates how *hyponyms* can transfer meaning between themselves based on context. Although *throw* and *sprinkle* are normally distinct in meaning, *throw* can mean *sprinkle* when used in a context of sprinkling.

In this verse, we are speaking about sacrifices, and sacrifices normally involve sprinkling (cf. **Lev 14** for the sprinkling on the Lepor).

A famous example of *hyponymic* transfer might be the phrase *white wine*. *White wine* is not *white*; it is *clear*. However, *hyponymic* transfer allows *white* to mean *clear* in the context of wine.

White wine can also be explained using the concept of a *subsective* adjective; among the wine family *white wines* are

clear but they are not white. Similarly, in sacrifices, *throwing* connotes *sprinkling* even though normally we would not call such an activity *throwing*.

By bringing in universal metaphors common to all languages the Rashi explanation gains richer and deeper meaning.

Meaning-Style *Daily Rashi* Sun 2/15/2015 Ex21-17b

Biblical Texts: Ex21-17b

Background: The verse states that a person who curses his father or mother shall die. In a rare move, Rashi comments, not on this verse, but on a sister verse **Lv20-09** which adds the phrase *he shall die, his blood is on him*.

Rashi Text: Any death penalty with the phrase *his blood is on him* refers to death by stoning. This principle is a generalization of **Lv20-27** which states *stone them for their blood is on them*.

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Raam, Mizrachi, Sifsay Chachamim

Rashi commentator: Various points are made:

- Why did Rashi deviate from the language of the Mechiltah which implies that the derivation - *blood on him* = *stoning* = is based on identical words (Gezayrah Shavah), the identical words of *his blood is on him* in the Leviticus verse where stoning is explicitly mentioned and all other verses where *blood on him* is mentioned. Why did Rashi speak about generalization
- In stoning it is the stoners that cause the person to bleed. So we might think that they are the cause of the blood. Instead the verse emphasizes that he, the sinner, is the source of

blood, *his blood is on him, not the stoners.*

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

One of the Rabbi Ishmael rule states that a verse that is among category that uniquely has a distinction teaches us about the entire category not just the particular verse.

There are a variety of verses where *his blood is on him* is mentioned. This category of verses is clarified in only one verse **Lv20-27** which connects the phrase *his blood is on him* with *stoning*. Thus this verse generalizes and teaches that all verses using the phrase *his blood is on him* refers to *stoning*.

Here is an analogy. Suppose you read (in a children's book) about the *colored ball*. Well indeed, balls can be pink, red, blue etc. But suppose throughout the book there is only one sentence which states the actual color, say *pink, the colored pink ball*. Then (according to the Rabbi Ishmael style rules) all references to a colored ball in the book refer to a *pink* ball.

Style Daily Rashi Mon 2/16/2015 Ex21-26b

Biblical Texts: Ex21-26b

When a person smites his slaves eye or tooth (out), he must free him as compensation for the damage.

Rashi Text: This law applies to the 10 fingers, 10 toes, nose, ears etc. So if a person cuts off his slaves ear then the slave

acquires freedom as compensation.

Rashi Newsletter Mizrahi, Gur Aryeh, Raam, Mizrahi, Sifsay Chachamim Rashi commentator: On this verse the Rashi Newsletter and Rashi commentators are identical.

Rashi is based on the Rabbi Ishmael style rules. One style rule refers to **Generalization of examples**. The verse says that a slave goes out from a smiting of *eye or teeth*. This generalizes to any *permanant body part that is visible* and hence the Rashi that it refers to cutting off fingers, eyes, ears, nose etc. By looking at the examples we can infer that a slave does not go free for cutting off

- moles (as these are not permanant body parts)
- baby teeth (as these are no permanant)
- wounds (as these are not cut offs).

The Talmud brings further illustrative examples (not brought by the Rashi commentators). For example, the slave goes free for cutting off an extra finger (some people are born with 6 fingers) since even though it is abnormal it is a permanant body part.

For a complete list (and other interesting examples) see Rambam, Slaves Chapter 5.

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