

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on TazRia MeTzoRaH

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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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- *Today we illustrate the Reference rule*
- *Sometimes a reference is explicit*
- *Sometimes however a reference is implicit*
- *We explore 3 types of references today*
- *Reference Rashis are excellent for Homeschooling and adults*

Meaning-Hononym/Paragraph *Daily Rashi* Sunday Apr 19, 2015 Lv13-45e

Biblical Text: Lv13-45e

And the leper that has a spot:

- *His clothes shall be torn*
- *His head [hair] shall be wild*
- *His lips will be covered*
- *And he will [announce | call out] impure impure*

Rashi: He, the leper will announce to others that he is impure (so that they may abstain from coming near him)

Sifsay Chachamim and Mizrach Rashi commentators: The Hebrew word **YiQRaH** which can equally mean

- *announce*
- *call*

means here *announce*. That is

- The leper will *announce* that he is ritually impure and therefore others should abstain from him
- We do not interpret (rediculously) that the leper will *call* others ritually impure.

This is inferred from the context of the verse which describes his self-humiliation: torn clothes, wild head, covered lips; it is consistent with this list that he announce he is impure (not that he should insult others).

There is further discussion based on the Talmud on why the word impure is repeated twice in the verse: *impure impure will*

he call. Among the reasons for the repeated word *impure* are

- a) he should announce he is impure so that others will separate and b) they will pray for him
- a) he should announce he is impure so that others will separate from him and b) other impure people should also worn that they are impure
- a) People should announce when they are impure and b) graveyards and graves should be designated so that people will avoid the impurity of stepping on them.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter contributes making explicit the **meaning-hononym** rule:

- **QaRaH** can mean *call*
- **QaRaH** can mean *announce*

The Rashi Newsletter also makes explicit the rule of paragraph unity, in fact, this is the Rabbi Ishmael style rule of *inferring meaning from context*. An overview of the paragraph (sentence) in which this phrase occurs shows its meaning:

- torn clothes
- dishelveled hair
- covered lips =>
- announce his impurity.

Comment: Although the analysis of the Mizrachi of *why* the word *impure* is repeated twice, *impure impure*, is interesting, since Rashi himself does not comment on this repetition we will not comment further.

Parallel Daily Rashi Monday Apr 20, 2015 Lv13-45e

Biblical Text: Lv13-45e

When you come to the land of habitation which I give to you, and I give a leprous affliction in the house of your possessed land.

Rashi: *I give a leprous affliction in the house is a good prophecy: God promises to give leprous spots in houses so that people will rebuild them and find the treasures hidden in the house.*

Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh, Rashi commentators: Rashi makes this inference because the verse could simply say *When there is a leprous affliction as it says by human and clothes leprousy.*

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: We make explicit the **parallelism** rule. We also present a format in which to see the parallelism as shown in the following table.

Verse	Leprous Type	Passive / active	Leprous type	Leprousy
Lv13-09	Personal	When there will be	In a person	A leprous affliction
Lv13-29	Head	When there will be	In a man or woman	An affliction
Lv13-47	Clothing	When there will be	In a garment	A leprous affliction
Lv14-34	Housing	I [God] will place	In the house of your possessed land	A leprous affliction

The table graphically displays the **parallelism** that the Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh discussed:

- The typical language is *when the leprousy happens*
- The leprous house language is *I will place a leprousy*

Such a contrast is clearly deliberate and indicates author intention. But that immediately raises the issue of why specifically with houses would God place leprosy there. Reviewing the leprous house procedure we immediately see why: The leprous house procedure requires in certain circumstances rebuilding the house and that allows inspecting the house foundations where people (e.g. the previous inhabitants) store treasures. Hence the Rashi: *This is good news; God places leprosy in houses so people will uncover the treasures of the previous heathen inhabitants.*

Meaning-Idiom *Daily Rashi* Tuesday Apr 21, 2015 Lv14-18a

Biblical Text: Lv14-18a

[Background: The Bible is discussing the purification of the leper] And the person purifying will wash his garments and shave his hair; and then he will return to the camp but he will sit outside his tent for 7 days]

Rashi: The phrase *he will sit outside his tent* is idomatic, meaning *he will abstain from his wife* (another idiom:))

Sifsay Chachamim, Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh, Rashi

commentators: The word *tent* refers to *his wife*. Indeed, otherwise the verse would be contradictory:

- First the verse says *he will return to the camp* [during his ritual impurity he was expelled from the camp]
- And then the verse says *he can't go to this tent*

Is his tent of a higher grade of holiness than the camp that the camp should be permitted and the house prohibited?

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: We make explicit the **meaning-idiom** rule. An idiom is a word or collection of words whose meaning transcends the sum of the meaning of the individual words.

The phrase *away from his tent* is no different than the English phrase *avoid his wife at evenings*. It is an **idiomatic** phrase that refers to intimacy.

The approach of the Rashi Newsletter is that it is the fact of the **idiom** that drives the Rashi. One does not need further proof.

However the Rashi commentators cite the following contrastive set of verses at the giving of the Decalogue and Torah (**Nu05-27:28**):

- Tell the nation, return to your tents
- But you [Moses], stay with me here and I will cite to you (the commandments)

We should contrast this last verse with the following verse which is also post Decalogue (**Ex33-07**):

- Moses took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, farther from the camp, ... whoever sought God would come to..the tent outside the camp

These three verses do not prove what *tent* means but they do prove that *tent* is not meant literally. For it were literal, then how could Moses be told that unlike the Jewish people who returned to their tent he should stay with God when in fact he still stayed in a tent!

We infer from these passages, not the particular meaning of *tent*, but the fact that it is an **idiom**. The understanding of this idiomatic usage is based on common sense: *tent refers to normal marital life*.

Comment: So

- The Rashi commentators are argumentative and seek rational support for the idiom while
- The Rashi Newsletter is common-sensical and nuanced. *Jews go to their tents while Moses stays with God* seems to indicate that the *Jews returned to normal marital life which had been prohibited right before the Decalogue (Ex19-15)*; so *tent* means normal marital life and intimacy

This invocation of common sense, especially in the explanation of **idioms** is an important principle and method in understanding Rashi. This is often overlooked by the Rashi commentators. You can't apodictically prove an **idiom**. You must hear the nuances.

**Parallelism-Reference *Daily Rashi* Wednesday Apr 23, 2015
Lv13-02c**

Biblical Text: Lv13-02c

[Background: The Bible is discussing the ritual impurity of leprosy] When a human has in his skin, a raised, supplemental, or bright [leprous spot], then he will be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his children the priests.]

Rashi: It is a decree of the Bible that ritual impurity and purification of leprous spots requires priestly declaration

Mizrachi, Rashi commentator: Here is what Rashi means

(without explaining how he derives it)

- If I am in a room with a dead body I become ritually pure. The status of ritual purity does *not* require anyone's declaration. Rather the status of ritual purity happens because of an event in the real world.
- Contrastively, if I have a leprous spot I do *not* become ritually impure simply because of this event in the real world. In addition to the *leprous spot* (a real-world event) I also need the *declaration of a priest*. That is I do not become ritually impure until two things happen: a) a real world event (leprous spot) and b) a declaration of a priest.

Sifsay Chachamim and Malbim Rashi commentators:

Malbim, following Sifsay Chachamim, skillfully uses the parallelism rule. He reviews all descriptions of *Priest* in **VaYiQRaH**. Here is the list for **VaYiQRaH**

- **Lv01-05** the children of Aaron the priests
- **Lv01-07** the children of Aaron the priest
- **Lv01-09** the priest
- **Lv06-22** the priests
- **Lv13-01** Aaron the Priest or *one* of his children the priests

As can be seen, **Lv13-01** stands out, particularly the word *one*. Malbim and Sifsay chachamim argue that this teaches that *anyone* can see Leprous spots (but you still need a Priest to declare it).

Comment: We would criticize this approach. Even though it is based soundly on parallelism, the inference that the word *one* can be snapped out of its phrase *one of his children the priests* and mean *anyone* is not well founded.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter also bases the inference on **parallelism** but on the difference of active and passive. Compare the following passages describing the involvement of the priest. Besides the verse in bold we indicate the leprous-afflicted organ in underline.

- **Lv13-02** Skin he will be brought to Aaron the priest or...
- **Lv13-09** Skin he will be brought to the priest
- **Lv13-19:20** Burns He will be seen by the Priest; the Priest will see
- **Lv13-24** Burns The priest will see it (the leprous spot)
- **Lv13-30** Beard The priest will see the spot
- **Lv13-39** Blotches The priest will see
- **Lv13-43** Head The priest will see it
- **Lv13-49** Clothing It [the spot] will be seen by the priest

English is a particularly good language to distinguish active and passive since the passive can be recognized by the word *be* which we have italicized in the above list.

The use of active and passive suggests (but does not yet prove) that

- There are times when the priest initiates (active mood) the entire process
- There are times when someone else identifies the leprous spot but one still has to be brought to the priest (passive mood); Why? To confirm and finalize the status.

But there is an even more convincing proof which we find in **Lv14-34:37**

- God places a leprous spot in houses
- The house owner comes and tells the priest, I think there is a spot in my house
- The priest orders the house emptied *prior to his arrival at the house* in order to *prevent ritual impurification of what is in the house*
- And only afterwards (after the house contents have been saved by removal) does the priest come (and proceed to declare the house ritually impure)

We see from this passage an explicit statement that the real world event of leprousy, *by itself*, does not create an impure status *until* the priest declares it.

Comment: People frequently ask me about my Rashi novelties. I explain that (as in this instance)

- The Rashi commentators certainly knew of the rules of **parallelism and reference**
- But did not apply them consistently in each Rashi.

What I have done in this Rashi is avoided the obscure parallelism *one of the priests* implying *anyone* and instead found a more punchy parallelism based on active-passive as well as an explicit reference confirming the Rashi comment.

Meaing / Climax *Daily Rashi* Thursday, Friday Apr 23-24, 2015 Lv13-02a,b

Comment: We promised last week to show an example of a Rashi which clearly says one thing but is reinterpreted by the Rashi commentators in order to conform with Mishnaic law.

Here is the example. It is instructive.

Biblical Text: Lv13-02a

When a human has in his skin

- seeth (raised)
- sapacath (supplement) *or*
- bahereth (sky bright)

Rashi: The *raised, supplement and sky-bright* are names of (leprous) afflictions; they increase in whiteness.

Comment: So it sounds as if Rashi is saying that

- there are 3 types of leprous spots
- they correspond to 3 levels of brightness with the last being brightest and the first least bright.

However, such a statement would contradict the Mishnaic formulation that *leprous spots are two [categories] which are four [classes]*.

With this background let us analyze the Rashi comments.

Gur Aryeh, Malbim and Mizrach Rashi commentators:

There are actually 4 classes of leprous spots even though 3 are mentioned in the text. Furthermore the 3 mentioned in the text do not go up uniformly as seen in the following table

- Raised - level 3 of whiteness
- Supplement - level 2 or 4 whiteness
- Bright-sky - level 1 whiteness

With level 1 the brightest and level 4 the darkest.

When Rashi says they are increasing in whiteness he only meant that for raised and bright-sky. He did not mean that for supplement.

The Hebrew word *sapachath* means *supplement* as for example in the verse *add-me to one of the priestly classes to eat food* (1Sam 2:36). It follows that the text should be read as follows

- Raised
- Supplements (for the *raised*, before this word, or for the *sky-bright*, after it)
- Bright-sky.

Malbim beautifully and magnificantly explains this using the modern theory of color. According to color theory, every color is characterized by two attributes (there is actually a 3rd, saturation, which we will combine with hue)

- hue, refers to the wavelength(s) (e.g. green, blue, red, white, black, including the proportion of each wavelength)
- the intensity, refers to the power/amount of the wavelengths

Malbim then explains the 4 leprous classes using the following 2 x 2 table

The 4 Leprous categories	Purest white	Less pure white
Very intense	Sky-bright - <i>bahereth</i> intense, pure white Color of snow	Raised- <i>Seeth</i> (intense, less pure); Color of sheep wool
Supplement	Sky bright-supplement - <i>Sapacath</i> Pure white less intense Color of marble	Raised-supplement <i>Sapacath</i> Less pure less intense Color of egg white

Each table cell has 3 rows

- The top row is the English and Biblical name
- The second row are the attributes - how pure a white; how intense
- The 3rd row is a typical example. The Mishnah chose 4 standard objects as examples: Snow, marble, sheep, egg.

Using the above table we can understand the biblical verse as follows

When a person has a

- Raised (sheep-wool type skin affliction)
- (Supplement (egg white or marble white) or)
- Sky-bright (intense, pure white)

Note how we have captured the spirit of the Rashi commentators by using parenthesis to indicate the supplemental nature of the *supplement*.

Now we understand the Rashi

- These (3) are names of leprous spots (which correspond to 4 classes)
- They increase in whiteness (among the non-*supplement* names)

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: In this case, the Rashi newsletter has little to add over the commentaries particular that of Malbim.

We do add the following

- We make explicit the **meaning** rule. The Rashi commentators explain the meaning of the white spots using etymologies: **Raised** looks bright but **sky-bright** is brighter
- We make explicit the **climax** rule, the rule that a sequence of items in a biblical verse often reflects a climactic increasing nature. Here, the verse ends with the brightest item, the sky-bright. The rule of **climax** requires us to interpret the first mentioned item as less white than the last item. The middle item, the *supplement*, is seen as parenthetical and not part of the list!

Comment: As mentioned, this Rashi is a good example of a justified approach to reinterpreting Rashi. We shall point out other examples as the year goes on.

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