

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on BeHaR BeChuKoSaI
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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 bring a surprise appearance of the RaDaQ whose dictionary, (Grammatical) Roots is very important in understanding the Bible. Although RaDaQ did not write a commentary on Rashi, his works can be used to understand Rashi.*

Formatting-Context *Daily Rashi* Monday-Wednesday May 11th-13th, 2015

Biblical Text: Lv25-14b, Lv19-33a,Lv19-34a

- *When you have an alien living in your land do not tease him (Tonu); he is like a citizen ...love him like yourself because you were aliens in Egypt*
- *When you sell a sale to your colleague or purchase from a colleague do not tease prices (tonu)[rather] buy according to the years till Jubilee left*

Rashi: The *tease* in the first bullet refers to verbal teasing while the *tease* in the 2nd bullet refers to teasing prices up or down.

An example of verbal teasing is telling the alien "You may be treated like a citizen now but you were an alien yesterday." The reason for the prohibition is that the Jews themselves were aliens in Egypt and one should never point to others a blemish that you yourself once had.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: A very powerful exegetical rule is *context*. *Context* is in fact one of the 13 exegetical principles of Rabbi Ishmael - the meaning of a phrase is inferred from its context.

The Rashi Newsletter has a variety of formatting rules such as bullets, paragraphing etc. The fundamental principle of the paragraph (in all languages) is that the paragraph has a unifying theme. *Unifying theme* simply means context.

The bible can indicate a paragraph in a variety of ways including combining several themes in one verse or using an ABA form to indicate the paragraph (In English we use a blank line before and after the paragraph or a *blank-B-blank* form).

In this case both verses form *paragraphs*. Let us examine each one. First we examine the **Leviticus 19** verses

- Treat the alien like a citizen
- Do not *tease (Tonu)* him
- After all you were aliens in Egypt
- Love him like yourself

It should be clear that the unifying theme of the paragraph is *emotional equality* of citizens and aliens. Hence the various bullets developing the main theme: *alien = citizen, you didn't like being aliens, love him don't tease him*.

Hence the *context* requires that *teasing* be interpreted as *verbal teasing*, for example reminding him of his alien background.

Note also that the Rashi explaining the phrase *because you were aliens in Egypt* is another instance of the *context* or *paragraph rule*: You were once aliens so don't tease aliens in your land. The statement about the Exodus is seen as a cause of for the prohibition.

Now let us examine the **Leviticus 25** verses

- If you sell
- If you purchase
- Do not *tease prices*
- Calculate prices by years of lease remaining till the Jubilee

when land returns.

Here again the paragraph theme is *just commerce* and hence *teasing* here should be interpreted as *teasing prices* (raising or lowering prices off market value).

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: Interestingly the Rashi commentators also mention context. But they get bogged down in the *appearance* of the exegetical Sifrey commentary on Leviticus which says as follows on **Lv25**:

*The verse speaks about teasing prices. You say teasing prices; but perhaps it means verbal teasing. When it speaks in **Lv19** about teasing it speaks about verbal teasing. What then do I do with the prohibition of teasing in **Lv25**. I must make it refer to teasing prices.*

The language of this Sifray makes it appear that the *derivation* is not from context but rather from the fact that the prohibition of teasing is repeated twice and *consequently* there must be two teasings.

The Rashi commentators use here the *bullet* rule (also a formatting rule) which says that the *bullets* in a *bulleted list* each refer to a distinct prohibition and must be interpreted as distinct. This explains the language of the Sifray *You say such and such ...but perhaps it is otherwise...but we have two verses ...hence we must interpret each one as such*.

Comment: Several comments can be made on the differences in approach between the Rashi commentators and the Rashi Newsletter

- Perhaps the approaches are complementary. After all the Rashi commentators do mention context. Perhaps their intent is that *since there are two prohibitions of teasing we must (or may) interpret them distinctly based on their context.*
- Bear in mind that repeated verses are *not* always interpreted distinctly. Sometimes they are interpreted as *repeated to make the offender a violator of two prohibitions.* In fact, I prefer to use the distinctness argument only on *consecutive bullets* (In the verses commented on in this Daily Rashi, the bullets are in different chapters)
- Finally, I believe the Sifray's language *the verse has the following meaning ...you say the following meaning...perhaps it is another meaning...but that other meaning comes from another verse...so indeed the meaning is as we have said it,* I believe this language is simply a style (not content). In other words I believe the ultimate driver of interpretation is *context* and this is clear; however the Sifray has a habit of *expressing* context using the above style. The style itself should not be inferred to imply a derivation based on distinctness.

Grammar *Daily Rashi* Thursday May 14th, 2015 Lv26-43a

Biblical Text: Lv26-43a

The land will be abandoned from them and recover from her sabbaticals and they will atone for their sins as a consequence and consequence (Yaan ovyaan): (i) My civil law they despised and (ii) my statutes were loathesome to them.

Rashi: The Hebrew words *yaan ovyaan* means *as a consequence and consequence that you despised my civil law and loathed my statutes.*

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Hebrew word *yaan* is a connective word. The meanings and functions of the connective words are governed by **Grammar**. Hebrew grammar teaches us that *yaan* refers to *consequence*. Hence the Rashi translation *in consequence and in consequence*.

Now let us see what the Rashi commentators do.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi commentators: Whenever the word *yaan* is used it is followed by *that*. Hence Rashi added the underlined word *that* as shown in the Rashi text. In other words, Rashi understood that *that* is elliptical.

Comment: The following statistics explain why the Rashi Newsletter did not emphasize the underlined word *that* in Rashi

- The Hebrew *yaan* occurs 97 times in the Bible
- In only 33 of them does the word *that* (*Asher*) occur after it (*As a consequence that....*)
- In another 7 the word *because* (*Ki*) occurs after it (*This is a consequence because*)
- Thus only about 40% (40 out of 97) have a word like *that* or *because* after it
- There are further details; for example sometimes when *that* is not after the word *consequence* it is because *consequence* is followed by an infinitive. But this is getting too detailed

- Suffice it to say that Rashi's use of the word *that* is coincidental not intentional. It provides some more clarity but was not necessary.

RaDaQ author of (Biblical grammatical) Roots (Shoroshim):

The biblical phrase *in consequence and consequence* refers to multiple reasons; for example in **Lv26-43** two reasons are listed: i) despisement of civil law and ii) loathesomeness of statutory law. These are indicated with i) and ii) in the biblical text.

Comment: Interestingly there are 2 occurrences of the repeated *consequence and consequence* in the Bible (The other one is **Ez13-10** where there are also two reasons given).

Notice how Rashi translates the biblical *yaan ovyaan* as *in consequence and consequence*. The **RaDaQ** while not commenting on Rashi per se sheds light on it. Some of the Rashi commentators also hint at this dual *consequence* echoing a dual *reason*.

I find that using **RaDaQ** can be very informative when studying Rashi and always recommend him to students of Rashi.

Grammar-Meaning *Daily Rashi* Friday May 15th, 2015
Lv26-38a

Background: The verses discuss the punishment for the Jews not following Jewish law.

Biblical Text: Lv26-38a

And you will be lost in the nations; the land of your enemy will eat you.

Rashi: You will be *lost* means you will be *scattered* with no central governance and hence you will be *lost* from each other.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The text uses the active conjugation of the verb *to lose*. Note that the intensive conjugation of the verb *to lose* means *to destroy*. The active conjugation seems to mean to deprive of a livelihood. Let us look at some examples

- **Ps119:176** *I have erred; like a scattered sheep [from his herd], seek your servant*
- **Job04:11** *A lion scattered [from his herd] without venison and the sons of lions separate.*

In these verses, as indicated by the underline, the word *lost*, is best translated as wandered or scattered.

Consequently, Rashi translated the word *lost* used in the active conjugation as *scattered*.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: The Rashi commentators use the **contradiction** method

- The verse speaks about the Jews being *lost*. The Hebrew word used sometimes means *destroyed*.
- But later on in the chapter when the verse speaks about the Jews repentance God promises *not to abandon them*.

It follows that the word *lost* cannot mean *destroy* since God does not abandon them.

Comment: Notice the difference between the Rashi commentators and the Rashi Newsletter

- The Rashi Newsletter focuses on the *source* of the Rashi. Rashi is using the meaning of *loss* in the active conjugation which means *scattered* or *wandered*.
- The Rashi commentators use **contradiction**; it couldn't mean *destroyed* because that would contradict some verses later on.

I think the direct approach citing verses is punchier.

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 (Honyms)** 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 don't 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) 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