

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis For Parshat Be'Ha'aLotheChah
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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's issue is devoted to several famous Rashis, one of which occurs in this Parshah: The Rashis speak about God saying two things at one time which is impossible for a human to say or hear. The most famous of these Rashis was immortalized by the great poet, Rabbi Judah the Levite, in his famous Walk to the bride (Lecah Dodi) poem recited by many communities every Friday night. This Rashi states that God simultaneously uttered the Remember the Sabbath and Watch the Sabbath version of the decalogue simultaneously. We bring 3 other such Rashis today and offer a novel explanation based on the Rambam's view that prophetic visions happens in dreams. We basically posit (with support from Rashi of course) that the 600000 Jews standing at Mount Sinai had multiple dream visions corresponding to the multiple prophetic versions in the Torah. We begin with an unsuspecting Rashi which is the basis of this approach*

Grammar Daily Rashi Monday June 1st, 2015, Gn40-05a

Biblical Text: Gn40-05a

Background: [The chief baker and bartender were imprisoned by Pharaoh. Joseph oversaw that part of the prison. The baker and bartender had dreams which Joseph interpreted in terms of what would happen to them]

They dreamt the dreams of both of them, each person his dream in one night, each person person with its interpretation

Rashi: *They dreamt the dreams of both of them.* So each person dreamt his dream and the dream of his partner including its interpretation. [Rashi mentions another interpretation called the simple interpretation; we will deal with this in the

comments]

Approach of the Ra'am Rashi commentator: To clarify the Ra'am we first bring in a famous English analogy. Consider the following two sentences.

- The dog bit the cat
- The cat bit the dog

Although the words in each sentence are the same, they have totally different meanings. Why? Because *position* itself determines and drives meaning. The word before the verb *bit* is the subject while the word after the verb is the object, the recipient of the activity.

There is currently several research thesii in the United Kingdom on *position* as a determinant of meaning. Although most people understand and know the English example above, their is also a vast literature on position of adjectives. Consider the following two sentences

- The *two* of them: they dreamt a dream
- They dreamt the dream of the *two* of them

Notice the different position of the word *two*. It is this position which, whether in Hebrew or English, determines meaning. Hence the Ra'am's explanation:

It doesn't say the two of them dreamt a dream *but rather* they dreamt the dream of the two of them. This is the source of the Rashi comment that each person *in his dream*, saw his own dream and the dream of his partner with interpretations.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: We approach the Rashi the same way the Ra'am does. The contribution of the Rashi newsletter is to bring in modern research and to explicitly identify the *hard part* of the Rashi: Most people are not sensitive to *position*. In fact, many Rashis can elegantly be explained by *position*; many Rashi commentators overlook this elegant approach.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: They claim that the meaning of the text is that *the two of them had dreams*. They dismiss the 2nd approach of Rashi, which Rashi himself calls *midrasho, exegetical*, as read into the text. They also raise the following questions which Ra'am himself raises. If the baker and bartender saw each others interpretations:

- Why did they say when Joseph met them, *we have no interpretation to the dream?*
- Why did Joseph have to interpret their dreams (if they already saw the interpretations)?
- Why does it say that the bartender *saw that Joseph interpreted positively* and then asked Joseph for an interpretation. After all he *knew* the interpretation?

We will give more background and answer these three questions in the comment below. For now I observe that the Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi, *despite* their strong questions, are totally ignoring a principle of grammar that adjective position determines meaning. Even without answering the questions this is a strong argument. For example if someone said *the cat big the dog* you wouldn't say *(s)he meant the dog bit the cat since cats never start up with dogs*.

People sometimes ask me how I can take sides among the Rashi commentators. In this case, I am taking sides because Rashi and the Raam knew of the principle of adjective position while the other commentators seem to ignore it. (Note: If they acknowledged the principle and rejected it I wouldn't say this) This argument of *ignorance of a grammatical principle* is very often the basis of my choosing interpretations.

Comments: Let us try and reconstruct what happened in the prison cell. The baker and bartender meet each other. A typical dialogue might be as follows:

- Bartender: Hi. Who are you and what are you doing here
- Baker: I am the chief baker. Pharaoh just lost his temper and through me in here. Nothing was even the matter with my baking. I hope nothing happens to me. How about you
- Bartender: Well (e.g.) some of the wine was sour. But that has happened before. He never through me in prison. I hope this is not permanent.

Such conversations are normal in prisons. Such conversations trigger nocturnal dreams (In fact the Talmud in Berachot explicitly states that people dream about what they have been doing during the day)

That night they each had dreams. They also each saw each others dreams. Such dream sharing does happen with people living with each other (Very often husbands and wives will have shared dreams). Since they both knew what they deserved they probably dreamt the interpretation: The baker knew he was innocent and that he would be let out while the bartender knew he had been continually negligent and should be hung.

The verse says *In the morning Joseph saw that they looked haggard*. Although they had dreams the dreams could be wishes. The dreams and even their interpretations need not be prophetic. Joseph encouraged telling the dreams. When Joseph interpreted the baker dreams the same way that it was interpreted in the dreams, the bartender understood that maybe these were prophetic. He still hoped that the *birds eating from my head* was only a *concern* not a *prediction*. Hence he asked Joseph to interpret his dream, hoping that Joseph was always positive. However, Joseph saw through it and told him he would be hung.

I think this is all plausible and answers all questions raised by the Ra'am and Rashi commentators. I emphasize: Rashi interpreted the way he did because of a deep principle of grammar which is only now (in the 21st century) being understood.

We have one thing left to explain. Rashi calls the interpretation of the verse

- *The two of them dreamt dreams*, as simple
- *They dreamt the dreams of both of them*, as exegetical.

Why? After all, we said that the straightforward meaning of the text is *they dreamt the dreams of both of them*. Why then does Rashi call it exegetical. Doesn't this prove that Rashi did not fully believe it?

My answer is no. Why? Because Rashi is based on a

grammatical principle and therefore it is the straightforward meaning of the text.

How then do I interpret the Rashi keywords *simple* and *exegetical*.

- *Simple* refers to the way a *simple* person in the streets would read the verse. Such a person may be ignorant of certain grammatical subtleties. For example, *the simple* person might interpret *the cat bit the dog* as *the dog bit the cat*. Simple people very often *adjust* spoken words based on their understanding.
- *Exegetical* refers to a meaning based on sound and detailed grammatical principles. An exegetical meaning can always be proven through multiple examples.

In conclusion, I acknowledge that there are other approaches to *simple* and *exegetical*. Here are two

- Scholars like Livni see *simple* as referring to the *natural meaning* of the text; *exegetical* refers to something fanciful
- The Lubavitch Rebbe, zt"l, was of the opinion that when Rashi used *simple* and *exegetical* he was satisfied with *neither* of them. Both approaches had problems and therefore Rashi brought in both of them since there is something redemptive in each explanation. I personally believe that the 2nd Rashi explanation is always the grammatical meaning of the sentence. Rashi brings in the *simple* meaning to address *simple people* who might think Rashi is not talking to them. Rashi therefore first explains how they think and then gives the true explanation.

Note: In this particular Rashi, my view is more reasonable than

the Rebbe's view, because Rashi's 2nd explanation is based on solid gramamtical research that is current. However, I acknowledge that not every Rashi with two explanations is so clear cut. If people are interested they can write me and as we go through the cycle next year I will try and gather all such Rashis showing why the Rebbe argued the way he did and showing how I might approach it.

Note: The important thing is that this Rashi is the basis for the idea of shared dreams. Now let us examine the famous *shamor - zachor* Rashi.

Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Tuesday June 2nd, 2015, Ex20-08a

Biblical Text: Ex20-08, Dt05-12

- *Watch* the Sabbath to sanctify it...
- *Commemorate* the Sabbath to sanctify it...

Background: The Decalogue, the revelation of the 10 commandments, is presented twice in the Torah. Thus we speak about the two versions.

Rashi: *Watch* and *Commemorate* were spoken in one utterance, a phenomenon which a human cannot speak .

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: Of course there are many parallel versions in the Torah. But as the Gur Aryeh, Rashi commentator points out, *concerning both these decalogues it explicitly states* God spoke these words to the masses. So in this particular parallel case,

how could God speak two different versions. In fact, the Gur Aryeh justifies the literal interpretation of the Rashi comment *God spoke watch and commemorate in one word*.

Other approaches to this *one utterance* Rashi point out that sometimes the difference between two versions is in the spelling or in an extra letter. Here there are two different meanings

- *Watch* is basically a *do not*; *do not violate the Sabbath*
- *Commemorate* is basically a *do*; *do the observance of the Sabbath*.

Hence Rashi particularly had to address differences here.

There are other supportive comments brought by the Rashi commentators.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: We use the shared dream approach we brought above in the baker-bartender dream. Here are some important points:

- According to the Rambam and based on an explicit verse in **Nu12-06**, the vehicle for prophetic communication is the dream. So for example Rambam interprets the talking donkey in the Bilam prophetic vision as something that happened in a dream (in the real world, donkeys don't talk)
- We know from several verses in **Ex20** and **Dt05**, that the prophetic revelation of the Decalogue was revealed to the *entire congregation*.
- We know from **Ex16** and **Ex16-27** that the Jews were given the Sabbath laws prior to Mount Sinai and that some of them violated it.

So we suggest that every person was revealed in a dream what was relevant to him or her.

- Those who violated the Sabbath were told *to watch it*
- Those who did not violate the Sabbath were told to *commemorate it*
- Like the baker-bartender dreams people also dreamt about what was told to their neighbors.
- In the morning they got up and spoke to each other about their dreams.
- Moses then told the official Torah version of the Decalogue which included what was told to all the people.

Thus the statement *Watch and Commemorate were uttered in one communication which no human can do* refers to communication in one moment; The statement *which no human can do* means no human in his speech can say individual content to different people.

Hence, we have resolved the various portions of this Rashi using the concept of prophecy by dream.

Comments: Although not the subject of this Newsletter, our explanation of the Decalogue revelation is consistent with the view of Rambam in the Mishneh Torah, Yesodei Hatorah, chapters 7-10, that *the Jews believed in the Torah because they themselves witnessed it. It is the only time in human history that an entire nation witnessed a revelation. [This differs from other religions where revelation was to a handful of disciples]*

We interpret *an entire nation witnessed the revelation*

- Not to mean that the nation heard from Moses about his

revelation but rather

- Each Jew had the revelation with a tailored content to their situation and a confirmation by Moses' official version.

So of course they believed it: They themselves heard it.

Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Wednesday June 3rd, 2015, Ex20-01a

Biblical Text: Ex20-01a

Note the exquisite, punchy and beautiful parallelism

Ex20-01	God	spoke		<i>all</i>	these words	<i>to say over</i>
Dt05-19	God	spoke	<i>to your masses</i>		these words	

Rashi: God recited the 10 commandments in one utterance a feat which a human cannot do.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi comment is based on the italicized word *all* in the above table. On the one hand, one Decalogue says that God spoke *all* these words while on the other hand the 2nd Decalogue does not have the word *all*. Rashi explains this extra word *all* and the extra phrases *to the masses* to mean that

- Each nuance of the 10 commandments (*all* the words) was spoken to the individuals of the masses.
- However, the *written* version contains a summary with all

nuances

We invite the reader to review our explanations of the baker-bartender dream and the watch-commemorate Rashis discussed in the past two days. There we explained that the Decalogue prophecy happened through the medium of dreams (**Nu12-06**) and different people heard different things.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: The Rashi commentators emphasize the underlined word all as the source and driver of the Rashi comments.

Comments: The contribution of the Rashi newsletter is:

- To explicitly connect this with a **parallelism** as shown above that shows the emphasis of the word *all*. Note especially, that many Rashi commentators use the principle of an *extra word*. This is called **omnificance**; the principle that since God wrote the Bible every word and letter must have some significance. On the Rashi website, a word has exegetical significance only if the Author indicated the word to be special. One way of so indicating is through parallelism which highlights the word. We do not derive the Rashi comment simply because of the word *all* but rather because the word *all* occurs in one parallel verse but is absent in the 2nd thereby indicating emphasis.
- To tie this Rashi with the bartender-baker as well as the Joseph Rashi. By collecting Rashis with a similar motif, each Rashi gains naturalness rather than being a one-time motif.
- To give an operational meaning to *God saying the 10 commandments in one utterance*. Here *one utterance* refers

to *one moment*. As we have indicated, the communication was through dreams. There is an emphasis that God spoke to the *masses* and to *every Jew*.

Contradiction *Daily Rashi* Thursday June 4th, 2015, Nu12-04b

Biblical Text: Nu12-04b

Background: [Miriam and Aaron were speaking about Moses' separation from his wife. They thought that Moses was on a religious trip because he was a prophet; they also were prophets and did not separate from their wives. This was accusatory and slanderous on Moses.]

God said suddenly to Moses, Miriam and Aaron, The three of you: Go /to the Wilderness Temple.

Rashi: The underlined phrase *the three of you* teaches that all 3 were addressed in one utterance something impossible for a mouth to say or an ear to hear.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: Rashi here uses the **contradiction** method. On the one hand,

- Miriam and Aaron were speaking among themselves
- Moses, presumably, on whom they were speaking, was not there
- But the verse addresses all 3 of them *The three of you: Go to the Wilderness Temple*

Rashi resolves this contradiction by using the shared dream communication approach that we have used in the bartender-baker, the Decalogue, and the Watch-Commemorate Rashis

which we have discussed in the past 3 days. The reason it is not a contradiction is because like the baker and bartender, each of them personally had a dream in which that person was told: *The three of you, go to the Wilderness Temple*. So even though they were in two places they were told the dream at one time.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: The Rashi commentators point out that the driver of the Rashi is the underlined phrase *the three of you*. The Rashi commentators also point out the verse could have said: *God spoke suddenly to Moses, Aaron and Miriam: Go to the Wilderness temple*. In other words, there was no need to make a special mention of the *the three of you*.

The contribution of the Rashi Newsletter is:

- To connect the phrase *the three of you* with a contradiction; how could someone be addressing three people who were in different places
- To operationalize the communication using the concept of shared dreams as we have seen in the baker-bartender, watch-commemorate and Decalogue Rashis.

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 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