

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis For Parshat SheLaCh

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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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Database *Daily Rashi* Monday Jun 8th, 2015 Nu13-16a

Biblical Text: Nu13-16a

Moses called, Hosea, Joshua

Rashi: Moses prayed on Johsua, a pun on his name, which means salvation. The prayer was that God grant Joshua salvation from the bad advice of the spies. So the sentence literally says that *Moses prayed on Hosea that God save him from the bad advice of the spies, Johsua (which in Hebrew means God should save)*

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh Rashi commentators:

The underlined word called means here *prayer* for if it simply means that he *renamed* him, why is he renaming him here *prior* to the bad advice of the spies.

Gur Aryeh raises the issue of why Moses prayed for Joshua vs. Calev, another spy that differed from the spy majority. Gur Aryeh points out that it is more embarrassing for a teacher to have his disciple rebel against him and hence he specifically prayed for Joshua.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: Consider the following two verses each with the word *called*

- (Gn05-29) They called his name Noah for this reason: This person [Noah] will comfort us from our working and the toil of our hands
- (Gn21-31) They called the well, oath-well (Beer Sheva) because of the oath the two of them took there.

Note how the same word, called, is used in two senses

- In the 2nd sentence it means *renamed to commemorate an event of taking of oaths*

- In the 1st sentence it means *a prayer for the future that this child will comfort us.*

In fact the word *called* occurs several dozen times throughout the Bible. Sometimes it refers to the future (prayer) and sometimes it refers to the past (commemoration). There are other meanings as well.

The review of all uses of *called* is called the **Database** method since a database query is being used. Thus the Rashi Newsletter concretizes the observation by the Rashi commentators that the word *called* here is *future* oriented by making explicit the **database** rule which shows that in general called can sometimes refer to the past and sometimes to the future.

Comments: Note how the Gur Aryeh deals with a *consequence* of the Rashi comment: Why was Joshua prayed for but not Kalev. Such exploration of consequences is normal in Rashi commentators. However our purpose here is to distinguish between the essence of the Rashi and consequences.

Contradiction *Daily Rashi* Tuesday June 9, 2015, Nu13-27a

Biblical Text: Nu13-27a

[Background: The spies had come back from Israel. If you read further in the chapter they gave a very bad report on the land and said it was unconquerable. The Jews were severely punished for believing this report. Let us explore how the report begins]
The land we spied on is flowing with milk and fruit juices

Rashi: A lie is more believed when it has elements of truth

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: Since the bottom line of the spies was that the land was bad Rashi had to explain why they opened their remarks with something good.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter makes explicit that Rashi is using the **Contradiction** method. There is a contradiction between

- The good description - *a land flowing with milk and fruit juices*
- The bad description - *the land eats its inhabitants*

That is there is a contradiction in meaning. Rashi resolves this contradiction by explaining that lies are enhanced with some truth.

Note that **contradiction** is one of the Rashi Ishmael style rules.

Grammar-Connectives *Daily Rashi* Wednesday Jun 10th, 2015 Nu14-02a

Biblical Text: Nu14-02a

[Background: The Jews just heard the bad report of the spies that Israel is uninhabitable. They use the Hebrew word *loo* and say as follows] *If only (loo) we had died in Egypt*

Rashi: The Hebrew word *loo* here is an interjection meaning *if only*

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Hebrew word *loo* is a

connective word. Most connective words in Hebrew have multiple meanings. The Radaq, in his book *Roots*, (*Shoroshim*) lists the following meanings of *loo*.

- *Perhaps*: (**Gn50-15**) *Perhaps* (*loo*) *Joseph will hate us* [because of what we have done to him]
- *If only*: (**Gn17-18**) *If only* (*loo*) *Ishmael will also live before you.*

Rashi is simply clarifying which meaning is being used.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi commentators:

- Rashi could have translated: *Perhaps we could have died in Egypt*
- Rashi instead translated: *If only we had died in Egypt* [and had not seen this]

Contributions of the Rashi newsletter: First, we have shown a broader pattern. Many Rashis identify the specific meaning of a connective. There are also several scholarly papers on this. Thus our classification of this Rashi as **Grammar-connective** enriches the understanding of the Rashi by showing an underlying trend in Rashi.

Second: There is a difference in style between the Rashi Newsletter and the Rashi commentators

- The Rashi Newsletter style is *there are X meanings to the word W. In this verse meaning M fits best*
- The Rashi commentators style is to *negate the negative*: Rashi is stating that the verse does not mean M_1 but rather means M_2 . This *negate the negative style* is common among the

Rashi commenators.

Grammar-Antecedent - Format *Daily Rashi* Thursday-Friday Jun 11-12, 2015 Nu15-12a,b

Biblical Text:

When you

- Offer a **Lamb**, with a meal offering
 - tenth measure of flour mixed
 - with the fourth part of an hin of oil.
 - And the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering
 - You shall prepare [this meal offering] with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb.
- Offer a **Ram**, with a meal offering
 - two tenth measures of flour
 - mixed with the third part of a hin of oil.
 - the third part of a hin of wine, for a sweet savor to the Lord.
- Offer a **Bull**, with a meal offering
 - three tenth measures of flour mixed
 - with half a hin of oil.
 - a hin of wine,
 - Thus shall it be done for one bull, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid.

According

- to the number *of animals offered* that you shall prepare,
- so shall you do *for meal offerings*
- to every one *animal* according to their number *of flour, oil, wine*

Rashi: Rashi comments are indicated with italicized text.

Approach of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter

introduces the focus that the difficulty in the last verse (3 arrow bullets) are the pronoun, verb, and subject antecedents. Citing the verse we indicate in italics what is difficult.

- According to the number: *Number of what*
- You shall do: *What type of action*
- To every one: *One what*
- According to their number: *Number of what.*

The answer to these antecedent questions are indicated by italic inserts in the box as shown above. These italic inserts are the content of two Rashis.

In explaining this Rashi, we have also used the **formatting** rule:

- Solid Bullets indicate the animal offering type: lamb, ram, ox
- Hollow circle bullets indicate: the meal offering proportions of flour, wine, oil and the meal offering
- Arrow bullets indicate: animal Proportionality--if you bring 2 lambs you double the meal offering quantities; if you bring 3 lambs you triple the meal offering quantities. Similarly for multiple rams and oxen

The **Formatting** makes the Rashi even clearer. It helps us understand how Rashi knew what to insert.

Sifsay Chachamim, Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi Rashi

commentators: The Rashi commentators use their method of *negating the negative*. So e.g. instead of:

- Saying outright what should be said, according to the number of *animals* offered you shall offer *a corresponding number of libations*

- Instead they say what should not be interpreted: According to the number of meal offerings offered with one animal, you shall offer a corresponding number of libations (so e.g. if you offer two meal offerings with one animal you double the amounts for one meal offering; the Rashi teaches that offering multiple meal offerings with one animal is not acceptable.)

The approach of the Rashi commentators is valid but not as straightforward as the approach we took.

Comments: The Rashi Newsletter contributes by emphasizing a focus on referents and antecedents. It also contributes by formatting the passage showing clearly the relationships between animals offered and their various libations.

Some people ask me if the **Formatting** method is really a method. Perhaps it is simply a bunch of pictures. Does it really help? To appreciate the power of the **Formatting method** contrast the following two approaches to Rashi

- Approach of antecedents with distinctions: *According to the number* invites the comment Number of what? Animals or meal offerings?
- Approach of Formatting: The solid bullets, hollow bullets and arrow bullets define visually and clearly three parameters of distinction: 1) animal type, 2) meal offering proportions, 3) animal proportions (number animals brought). Having clearly defined these 3 parameters Rashi is empowered to look at each lack of antecedent (such as *According to the number*) and ask e.g. whether *number* refers to *animal*, *meal offering proportions*, or *animal proportions*.

We believe the formatting rule is one of the strengths of the

Rashi Newsletter approach. For more information see my article *Biblical Formatting: Virtual and Visual, Jewish Bible Quarterly*, Vol 35(1), pp. 17-27, 2007.

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