

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

### *Their presence in Rashis For Parshat Devarim*

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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](mailto:RashiYomi@GMail.Com).*

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- *Today we explore how Rashi treats mythology. The bible relates that Og's bed was 20 feet by 6 feet. Most of the contents here appeared on the Lookjed. list I am repeating them with one correction and some further insights.*

**Reference Grammar *Daily Rashi* Dt03-11a Tuesday,  
Wednesday July 21-22 2015**

**Biblical Text: Dt03-11a, Gn14-13a**

*Because only Og, King of Bashan, remained from the remnant of the Refaim; behold his intimacy-bed is an iron bed, is it not in the capital of Amon, 9 cubits (about 20 feet) its length and 4 cubits (about 8 feet) its width in (his) personal cubit*

**Rashi:** Refaim refers to the war of 5 and 4 kings in Gen14. Og survived the war as it says *The survivor came (and told Abraham about what had happened)*

**Contribution of Mizrachi, Rashi commentator:** Mizrachi explicitly uses the Rashi technique of **Other Verses** or **Reference**. In this case Mizrachi cites **Gn14-05** a verse in the war of 4 and 5 kings: *Kedarlomer came in the 14th year with his allies and conquered the Refaim in Asteroth Karnayim and also...*

Later on in that chapter it states **Gn14-13**, *The survivor came and told Abraham that his nephew was captured*

The **Mizrachi** (on **Gn14-13**) explains that Rashi's explanation that *the survivor* refers to Og, is grammatical and comes from the word *the* (It doesn't say a survivor came but rather the survivor came).

**Contribution of Rashi Newsletter:** In this instance the Rashi newsletter has nothing to add to the Rashi commentators except

the *classification* : Mizrachi is using a major Rashi method, **reference** and Mizrachi is using another major Rashi method, **Grammar**.

**Comments:** There is some interesting textual criticism in the **Mizrachi** (based on Rashi). Rashi after explaining that the survivor was Og, adds a comment from the Genesis Rabbah midrash: *This is Og who survived the flood!* Mizrachi explains that the reference is to **Gn06-04** which refers to the *Nefilim* a generation of giants (or intimidating people) who stole women for purposes of national expansion.

The Mizrachi criticizes this Midrash: *Gn14 talks about a war and then mentions the survivor. The simple meaning from context is that the verse is speaking about the survivor of the war, not the survivor of the flood.*

Is this not a strong objection? But the position of the **Rashi Newsletter** is that Rashi's 2nd explanation is always correct.

We in fact defend this bizarre Midrash below in Thursday's Rashi. For the moment we point out that Rashi's 2nd explanation does not contradict his first explanation but rather supplements it (And this answers the Mizrachi's objection). In other words

- Og did escape from the conquered Refaim but
- Og also had previously escaped the flood.

**Grammar Database *Daily Rashi* Dt03-11b Thursday July 23**

2015

**Biblical Text: Dt03-11a, Gn14-13a**

*Because only Og, King of Bashan, remained from the remnant of the Refaim; behold his marital-bed is an iron bed, is it not in the capital of Amon, 9 cubits (about 20 feet) its length and 4 cubits (about 8 feet) its width in (his) personal cubit*

**Rashi Text:** [The literal biblical text states *its width in the cubit of a person*] We interpret *in the cubit of a person* to mean *in personal cubits* in the cubit of Og.

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:** We already explained that the word *cubit* refers to the length of the hand from the tip of the 3rd finger to the elbow. In most people this is 1.5 feet; though sometimes it becomes 2 feet.

We therefore interpret the phrase *in the cubits of a person* to mean *in personal cubits*. That is we interpret the prepositional phrase *of a person* adjectivally to mean *personal*.

Let us now examine the commentators

**Contributions of Rashi commentators, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay chachamm.**

**Mizrachi:** You can *not* interpret *cubits of a person* to mean *personal cubit* because if so, what does the text teach you. (The Mizrachi in fact cites the Bible Commentator, Ibn Ezra).

Mizrachi continues: I think the point of the vesre is that his height was abnormal. Using the assumption that beds are 1.5

cubits bigger than ones own height we would conclude that Og was 8 cubits tall.

**Gur Aryeh**: Cites the Rashi commentator the Ra'am, who points out that declaring *personal cubit* means we still dont know his exact height. Ra'am also points out that the text simply wanted to tell us he had abnormal height.

**Sifsay Chachamim**: Sifsay chachamim also asks *What is the point of the text*. Sifsay chachamim suggests that *cubit* possibly refers to one person-height as it does in some Russian cities. So the text tells us that his bed was the length of 9 people.

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter**: Did you notice that all the commentators explain the verse as referring to Og's height. But the emphasis in the verse was on Og's bed not his height.

To fully understand this we use the **database** method. There are three words in biblical Hebrew for bed

- **Mitah**: This means bed
- **Mishkav**: From the root *shakav*, to sleep.
- **Eres**: This refers to an intimacy bed (There is no parallel term in English). How do I know? By examining verses with the word Eres

The following verses all have a connotation of intimacy

- **Songs 1:15** Behold my lover you are beautiful, even pleasant, our *eres* (bed) is joyful

- **Prv07-13:18 13.** So she grabbed him, kissed him, and with an impudent face said to him, I have had to sacrifice peace offerings; this day have I paid my vows Therefore came I forth to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you. I have decked my bed (Eres) with coverings, with tapestry of fine linen from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed (Mishkav) with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us drink love till the morning, let us kneed in lovemaking.
- **Ps132-1:4** I have vowed to God that until I find a house for Him, I will not a) come to my house b) go up on my decked bed (Eres), c) give sleep to myself or naps to my eyebrows.
- **Amos 6:4** [Rebuke to Jews] Who sleep on ivory beds (Mittah); stretched out on intimacy beds (Eres)

Some of these verses are clearer than others but it appears that Mittah is used for sleeping, Eres for intimacy and Mishkav for both.

We now pair the following verses together

- **Dt03-11** Og's intimacy bed was iron, 20 feet by 8 feet [The size of a room]
- **Gn06-04** The Nefilim (literally *fell-ers* (*makes you fall when you see them*)) existed in those days and also afterwards; the judges would come on ordinary women for purposes of procreation

I would suggest the following:

- **Gn06-04** describes a nation of intimidating people who used sexual slavery; they existed then and *afterwards*
- **Gn14-13** describes the Refaim (literally *softers - they make you feel soft* ) from whom *the* survivor came to tell Abraham what happened
- **Dt03-11** describes Og King of Bashan who survived from the Refaim with an iron bed (presumably the bed had chains) that was 20 x 8 (presumably female captives were chained to the beds and the king could visit them as he wished).

I now discuss the Midrash that Og survived *both* the Refaim attack in **Gn14-13** as well as the Flood. The Midrash is noting that both Og/Refaim as described in **Dt03-11** and the Nefilim as described in **Gn06-01:04** used sexual exploitation as a means of national expansion. The key contribution of the Rashi Newsletter here is to identify *Eres* as intimacy bed and to explain that the 20 x 8 foot dimensions did not refer to how big Og was but rather to his sexual exploitation.

**Comment:** Some might object that I have not really used the database method. After all I have only noted a similarity

- Between *iron bed* and iron chains
- Between *big bed* and sexual slavery
- Between two nations that used similar exploitation

techniques.

The issue remains whether the above is the simple meaning of the text or homiletic. It is well known that the Lubavitcher Rebbe held that when Rashi presented two explanations that

- There was an element of truth in both
- There were difficulties with both.

So it appears that the Rebbe is correct here! After all, can we really look at words like *iron, 20 feet x 8 feet* to describe a bed and glibly say that this is the simple meaning of the text?

Why then does the Rashi Newsletter disagree with the Rebbe? The answer is very deep. We regard Genesis not as a book about creation nor as a book about history. We all know the severe problems with regarding Genesis as a description of creation or even as history. We regard Genesis as *a complete description of the personalities of all nations and organizations that have, that are and that will exist on this planet. Their beliefs, their strengths and their vulnerabilities are completely identified.*

If we accept this premise then

- **Gn06-01:05** clearly and explicitly identifies the Nefilim as a nation based on intimidation and sexual exploitation. We are told this nation existed both now and *afterwards*
- **Gn14** clearly speaks about *the* survivor of the Refaim. The word Refaim like Nefillim refers to intimidation.

- If **Dt03** speaks about Og who alone survived the Refaim and then describes his bed as i) iron and ii) 20 x 8 feet, we are completely justified in identifying these 3 sources. We are so justified because of the fundamental perspective that the main point of interest is the operational methodology of the nation.

**Comment:** It is not the nature of the Rashi Newsletter to engage in political statements but as just indicated Genesis *is* a political book. It is *the* political book - it contains the blueprints of all nations and organizations. It gives complete details. The perspective of the bible is that sexual exploitation should be openly discussed as one approach to government (Because only through understanding them can we oppose them).

I close with one story. When the Oslo agreements came out there were discussions in the newspapers that peace may bring as a side effect intermarriages. I read of one such Arab-Jewess marriage where the Arab husband (and her children) drove her through abuse to be a suicide bomber. Fortunately, in this case, the bomb did not go off, she cooperated with authorities and was reunited with her children and separated from her husband. The perspective of the Rashi Newsletter on this and similar events is that if we properly taught Genesis people would be aware of such *possibilities* and more likely to avoid them.

**Connective Words *Daily Rashi* Gn07-23b Friday July 24 2015**

**Biblical text:** [The flood] erased all living on the ground...and most of Noah remained in the ark

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:** We contributed the translation that the Hebrew work Akh means *most of, usually, probably*. This translation explains most midrashim and makes them the simple meaning of the text. See my article *The Meaning of Akh*, **Jewish Bible Quarterly**, 33(2), 2005. Our translation above deviates from the JPS translation that *only Noah* remained in the ark.

But what does *most of Noah* mean. Rashi offers two charming explanations

- The cold winter nights, the crowded conditions, the limited food, on the ark, all led to severe ematiation. So although Noah survived the flood, *most of Noah* survived since he lost much weight
- Noah fed all the animals. However, he had scheduling problems. He fed the lion late one day; the lion in anger hit him on his thigh. So indeed, only *most of Noah* remained.

Remember our basic principle from yesterday: *We regard Genesis as a complete description of the personalities of all nations and organizations that have, that are and that will exist on this planet. Their beliefs, their strengths and their vulnerabilities are completely identified.*

Genesis follows the Jacobian methodology of using animal symbolism to describe personalities: Judah is a lion, Naftali is a

gazelle etc. But then Noah's ark did not have animals; it had people whose personality resembled from among those animals.

Who then is the mighty lion who smote Noah? Why it was Og, King of the Refaim and Bashan. He was a mighty lion who achieved nationhood through sexual exploitation. He smote Noah in the ark.

This then is the missing link.

- There was a nation of *Nefillim*; they achieved nationhood by stealing women. Their leader was always called Og just as the leader of Egypt was always called Pharaoh.
- The leader of this group at the time of Noah entered the ark as the lion (and had fights with Noah)
- Later descendants were also leaders and founded the Refaim nation similar to the Nefilim nation. It was *the* survivor of the Refaim war, undoubtedly the Og of that time, who came and told Abraham that his nephew was captured
- The later descendants founded the Bashan kingdom. The Og of the Bashan kingdom used sexual exploitation. His bed had iron chains for female captives and had dimensions of 20 x 8 for multiple partners.
- His bed was held on display and held in the capital of Amon.

**Contribution of the Rashi commentators, Mizrachi, Gur**

**Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim:** These commentators were unaware of the translation, *akh = most*. They therefore use non-standard methods. *Why does the verse say that only Noah remained? Don't I know that? It must therefore be that part of Noah did not survive.*

The explanation we gave based on the translation *most of=Akh*, is clearer.

## 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*

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**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

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**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)

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**IV-PARALLELISM:** (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited

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**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.

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**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

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**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)

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**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

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**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.

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**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