

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis For Parshat VaEthChaNaN
Vol 24#2- Adapted from Rashi-is-Simple

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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 Malbin.

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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Meaning - Synecdoche *Daily Rashi* Dt04-08a Monday July 27 2015

Biblical Text: Dt04-08a

Who is a great nation? One that has righteous civil and statutory laws like all of this Torah which I command you to you today.

Rashi: A righteous law is a law that is proper and acceptable.

Contribution of Mizrachi, Rashi commentator: The verse uses the underlined word *righteous*. *Righteous* typically refers to

- People who are righteous; but in this verse refers to
- Laws that are righteous

In other words, an adjective - *righteous* - that typically refers to people, in this verse refers to inanimate laws.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter adds to the Mizrachi explanation *classification*. Rashi is using a standard *figure of speech, synecdoche*, by which a good example of a class can be used to name the entire class. Some typical everyday examples are found below:

- Honey is a typical example of the class of sweets
- The 12 hour day is a typical example of the entire (24 hr) day
- Putting down one's foot is a typical example of assertion
- Lending a hand is a typical example of help.
- Righteous person is a typical example of the class of all righteous things.

So for example, in biblical hebrew the word *honey* can refer to

anything sweet even if it has no honey; in English you can describe verbal advice as *lending a hand* even though you have not made any motions.

We can therefore understand the Mizrachi's explanation that righteous refers to laws as an example of synecdoche.

Grammar Daily Rashi Dt04-14a Tuesday July 28, 2015

Biblical Text: Dt04-14a

And me [Moses] God commanded at that time to intensively teach you statutes and civil laws [in order] to do them in the land you are coming to conquest.

Rashi Text: *To intensively teach you, that is, the oral law.*

Contribution of the Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay

Chachamim, Ibn Ezra, Ramban: The issue facing all commentators is *what* is to be taught by Moses.

Ramban, Ibn Ezra: The verse speaks about teaching the other biblical laws (The verse is speaking about the decalogue and hence the command to teach laws refers to other laws). This is the simple meaning of the text.

Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim: They respond to the Ibn Ezra and Ramban: It explicitly says *at that time*, that is, at the time of the Decalogue. But then it could not be speaking about other biblical laws since they were not yet given.

My response to Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim: The

verse simply says: *And me, at that time, God commanded to teach you other laws.* So indeed, we know that Moses reascended to Mount Sinai after the Decalogue. Presumably, the command by God was to come back up and learn other laws, laws other than the Decalogue, to teach the nation later. The phrase *at that time* refers not to the teaching of the other laws which were not yet known, but rather refers to Moses ascending the mount and learning the other laws. This is reasonable.

Contributions of Rashi Newsletter: The biblical word *to teach* used in the verse is *lamed* and is in the intensive conjugation. Hence *lamed* does not just mean to learn but rather to intensively learn to take a course in the area.

- Verses with the simple conjugation of *learn* speak about *learn* in the sense of *consequence, inferring, knowing, being aware or coming to a conclusion.*

Dt18-09 - The king carries the Torah with him at all times in order to be aware that he must fear God

Dt14-23 - Moses admonishes the Jewish people that when initially arriving in Israel they should get to know the idolatrous practices of the surrounding nations.

- When used in the intensive, *lamed* refers to intensive learning, the type of learning that comes from taking a course, and hence would refer to learning with all details, that is in

the oral law.

Summary: The Rashi commentators derive the Rashi, *teach the oral law*, from the phrase *at that time* while the Rashi Newsletter derives the Rashi from the intensive conjugation.

Note: We have not rejected the Rashi commentators: We explained, that at the time of the Decalogue Moses was commanded *at that time* to ascend again to Mount Sinai to receive further instruction to the Jewish people.

Synonyms *Daily Rashi Dt06-07a* Wednesday July 29, 2015

Biblical text: And you shall *tooth* these laws to your family and speak about them while in your house, while walking, when going to sleep and when arising.

Rashi text: *tooth these laws* means sharp learning; that the words are sharp on your tongue like teeth; in other words, if someone asks you, respond to him immediately without hesitation.

Contribution of the Rashi commentators, Mizrahi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim: These commentators explore the word *to tooth* which comes from the Hebrew root *shin-nun-nun*. The Rashi commentators explore two approaches

- The Hebrew root is **Shin-Nun-Hey**, *repetition*. This refers to a type of learning based on repetition, that is memorization.
- The Hebrew root is **Shin-Nun-Nun**, *sharp*. This refers, as

Rashi explains, to sharp learning with immediate terse responses.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: We agree with the Rashi commentators. We add an explicit classification of their explanation as use of the **Grammar** rule.

We also point out that the English word *sharp* or the corresponding Hebrew word

- Refers to physical sharpness: A sharp object like a needle or knife, has very small contact area and hence the force per unit inch is very big

(Let us explain: Suppose your hand exerts 1-3 pounds of force per square inch. If I press against someone over an area of a square inch I am just exerting 1-3 pounds. But if I exert the same pressure 1-3 pounds over the tip of the needle which is 1/10000th of a square inch then my pressure per square inch is 10000-30000 pounds per square inch. The reason a needle or knife *cuts* is because of the increased *force per unit area*.

- Refers to linguistic sharpness: But what does it mean to say that a word is sharp. It certainly does not refer to physical sharpness. Granted, it is a metaphor but we can still ask what it means. I would suggest that a *sharp phrase* carries much information with a few words similar to a sharp object allowing much force with a small area of exposure.

So the emphasis in both cases is *brevity, smallness*.

**Grammar Daily Rashi Thursday-Saturday Dt05-24a,
Nu11-15a,b July 30-31, August 1st 2015**

Background: In both these verses the word *you* is a *female you* despite the fact that the person addressed is male.

Dt05-24a Background: The people have just heard the fire visions of the Decalogue. They ask Moses that he should speak as an intermediary rather than then directly listening to God. In so asking, Moses is referred to with the *female you*.

Nu11-15a Background: The Jewish people were complaining about desert conditions and wanted to return to Egypt. God was angry with the Jewish people and smote them. Moses in turn complains to God that he can't by himself lead these people. Moses says *If you continue to treat me this way* [unaided leadership] *then kill me* [first] *so I will not see the evil that happens to me*. Here again the word *you* (referring to God) is in the female form. Even worse, Moses states *if you continue to treat me this way, then kill me* [first] *so I will not see anymore the punishment that happens to them*. But the verse says *the punishment that happens to me*. So *me* is used instead of *them*.

Verse text: Dt05-24a *You* [male *you, Moses*] go near God and listen to prophecies, all that God commands us, and you [female *you, Moses*] speak to us all that God our Lord speaks to you and we will listen and do.

Nu11-15a *And if you* [female *you, God*] *treat me this way* [unaided leadership] *then please kill me* [Rashi: Kill me *first*] *so*

that I don't see the punishment that happens to me [Rashi: them].

Rashi text:

a) Use of *them* vs *me* is an example of etiquette delicacy. The scribes of Ezra's time observed 18 such etiquette delicacies in the Bible (when female, male are confused or plural singular or first, 2nd, 3rd person. Here Moses refers to the evil that will befall him instead of the Jewish people; he uses delicate speech (me vs. them) so as not to talk about the evil that will befall the people)

b) Use of a female *you* indicates that Moses became weak/depressed upon hearing that the people wanted an intermediary instead of directly talking to God.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: What about the verse where Moses says to God *if you* [female you] treat me this way then kill me first. Rashi says *Moses became weak like a woman*. But the word *you* addresses God. Rashi should have said *God became weak like a woman*.

We think the solution of this clear and obvious. *In the very same verse Rashi speaks about etiquette delicacy. In fact this is one of the 18 verses containing etiquette delicacy. So indeed, Moses was addressing God in the feminine because God was upset; he no longer tried to get the people to repent but rather was punishing them. But then as a matter of etiquette delicacy, Rashi instead of saying that God became weak like a woman*

says *Moses became weak like a woman*. I see this as the simple meaning of the biblical and Rashi text.

Contribution of Rashi commenators, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh and Sifsay Chachamim: The Rashi commenators by and large explore the idea of female weakness. They also elaborate on reasons. We have indicated their ideas above

- Moses was weak/depressed that the Jews wanted to hear God through an intermediary rather than directly through him
- God was so to speak depressed; He no longer dealt with the sins of the Jewish people by asking them to repent but rather by punishment.

However, the Rashi commentators overlook the explanation of why Rashi explains the *you* as referring to Moses vs God (because of etiquette delicacy). They go through various ingenious gyrations to explain this. One example is the following; *if you (female) do thus to me* is twisted to mean *if you do thus to me to make me a female you*. Such explanations should not be perceived as something the Rashi commentators fully believed but rather as an *attempt* to explain a peculiar verse.

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