

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis For Parshat Re'eh

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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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- **SPECIAL 3 PART SERIES ON PESHAT AND DERASH**
- This week we have a special treat: We give an overview of the Rashi Newsletter approach to Peshat. We also include Rashis from Parshat Reeh. We deviate from our usual format but still associate each Rashi with a day. Because of the special nature of this issue it was a week late. We intend to also publish the Rashi Newsletter for Shofetim this week

PESHAT vs DERASH PART I of III

Part I of this series may be accessed at

<http://www.Rashiyomi.com/rule2404.pdf>

Part II of this series may be accessed at

<http://www.Rashiyomi.com/rule2405.pdf>

Part III of this series may be accessed at

<http://www.Rashiyomi.com/rule2406.pdf>

The Lookstein Jewish Education, Lookjed, listserv recently had an inquiry as to how one should define *Peshat*. Although I use my approach to *Peshat*, the *straightforward meaning of the text*, every week I thought it would be useful to:

- Explain the Rashiyomi letter view on Peshat
- List the half dozen strategies and approaches I use to resolve difficult Rashis.

I define *Peshat* as the *spontaneous reaction of a native speaker to a collection of words (spoken or written)*.

Derash is a tricky word. Unknowingly it has attained two meanings

- *Derash* is very often used in the sense of an *ethical but not necessary reading of a text, something fanciful*
- *Derash* also can refer to a *nuanced reading of a text*.

Since *Peshat* includes nuances, innuendoes and puns – to recap, it includes them because native speakers of a language spontaneously respond to nuances and

innuendoes – we can discuss *Peshat-Derash* together and regard *Derash* as a *special type of Peshat*.

But Rashi frequently makes points that *appear* to be *ethical but not necessary*. The RashiYomi website has developed strategies and methods for dealing with these passages. We list these strategies and approaches and then lightly illustrate them. The five main approaches to making Rashi comments spontaneous are:

- Rashi *form* vs. Rashi *meaning*
- *Stages*
- *English translations*
- *Double derivations*
- *Intended Puns and innuendoes*

These principles are illustrated in the five column table below. We show how a reader would err in thinking that Rashi engaged in ethical statements; we also show a simple approach making the Rashi comment *spontaneous*.

| Day of study | Rashi strategy | Biblical Text | Why Rashi appears to be <i>ethical but not necessary</i> – <i>homiletic</i> – <i>fanciful</i> | Approach to make Rashi comment the spontaneous reaction to the verse |
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| <p>Sunday 8/16/201 5</p> | <p>Stages/Translation/nuances – <i>The spontaneous reaction to a verse may be something nonspecific (Stage 1). There are then several possibilities of specificity (Stage 2). The Peshat refers to Stage 1. We also see here how Peshat can refer to nuances</i></p> | <p>Nu10-01a,b [God told Moses] Make for yourself personally 2 silver trumpets... which will be used to summon the nation and to initiate further journey</p> | <p>The literal verse says >> Make for you 2 silver trumpets ...for summoning and journey<< Rashi seems to exaggerate the redundant phrase <i>for you</i>: Rashi says: a) People will trumpet you like a king; b) The trumpets will be for personal use (no one else can use them). This seems far fetched and read into the verse</p> | <p><i>For you</i> – is an indirect object. Rashi in about 15 places in his Torah commentary explains indirect objects as indicating a personal aspect. In other words, in Hebrew <i>for you</i> is personal (Similar say to use of <i>tu</i> vs <i>vous</i> for <i>you</i> in French; <i>tu</i> indicates a personal relationship). By translating <i>each</i> of the 15 places as <i>personal</i> Rashi captures the correct nuances. But this is stage 1: The trumpets are for personal use. But how? After all they are used to summon the nation and to initiate journey. Stage 2 of the commentary attempts to indicate <i>possibilities</i>: a) The trumpets are also used as an honor call to Moses who was treated as a king; b) The trumpets are Moses' <i>personal</i> trumpets; no one else can use them.</p> |
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| <p>Monday 8/17/201 5</p> | <p>Nuances /Inuendoes – <i>A perculiar word, grammatical usage or spelling, <u>naturally</u> suggests a relevant idea. Since this is a spontaneous reaction of any native speaker we call it Peshat.</i></p> | <p>Gn23-16 Abraham and a person named Ephrohn negotiate. Abraham wishes a burial plot for his wife who just died. At first Ephrohn offers him the burial plot for free. But in the end Ephrohn charges him full price in a fancy currency</p> | <p>When the bible describes the final payment by Abraham to Ephrohn it says > Abraham paid out to Ephro_n< Rashi commenting on the misspelled Ephro_n says >A deficient spelling indicating ; he said a lot [for free] but did little (deficiently). It appears Rashi is exaggerating the implications of a spelling to poke fun at Ephrohn for his unethical behavior</p> | <p>The word Ephrohn occurs 8 times in Gn23. Each time it is spelled Ephrohn, fully. The one time Ephrohn shows his true colors as a miser it is spelled deficiently [Ephro_n]. I would reword Rashi >A deficient spelling for a deficient person< This is the Stage 1 of the <i>Peshat</i>. In all languages, a misspelling of an important official or a mispronunciation of his/her name is spontaneously understood as an innuendo indicating disapproval. Stage 2 of the <i>Peshat</i> explains <i>how</i> he was deficient: He spoke as if he would give cheaply or for free but when push came to shove he demanded full price in a fancy currency.</p> |
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| <p>Tuesday 8/18/201 5</p> | <p>Nuances / Inuendoes</p> | <p>Lv04-22a IF a priest sins...IF the community sins ...IF an individual sins...WHEN a king sins</p> | <p>Rashi says: WHEN- WHEN / WIN –WIN when the King admits he sins and brings a sin offering. Rashi appears to be making puns on the sounds of WHEN and WIN. Ethical but fanciful</p> | <p>This is a Grammatical pun. The word to introduce cases is IF not WHEN. WHEN sounds like WIN. Furthermore all paragraphs in Lv04 begin with IF except the paragraph on King sin offerings which begins with WHEN. Thus the pun is intended. Of course, the pun is spontaneous because we all know and wish that leaders would confess when they make mistakes.</p> |
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| <p>Wednesd ay 8/19/201 5</p> | <p>Rashi form vs. meaning – <i>The underlying reason of Rashi is sound but Rashi expresses the reason in terms of something fanciful (play on letters)</i></p> | <p>Gn32-05 I [Jacob] <i>stayed over</i> [Garti] by Laban and delayed until now [to get back to you]</p> | <p>Rashi says when the letters of Garty are scrambled we obtain Taryag the number of commandments. This shows that Jacob observed all commandments while by Laban. Now isn't this silly. Rashi appears to import an ethical lesson by playing on letters.</p> | <p>Jacob <i>stayed over</i> vs <i>resided</i> (Chizkuni, Rashi commentator). Jacob lived 20 years in town, amassed much wealth, married two women and yet he says he <i>stayed over</i>. The spontaneous reaction to this unusual phrase is that he felt uncomfortable, a non-resident. He didn't play local political games. This is stage 1. At stage 2, we list possibilities and conclude all three comments of Rashi: a) Jacob was like a non-citizen (<i>stayed over</i>); b) He never accepted a town position; c) He stuck to his own religious observances</p> |
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| <p>Thursday 8/20/201 5</p> | <p>English Translation – <i>The English translations were created by King James and are not Sinaitic. If we can consistently translate otherwise the Rashi comment may become spontaneous</i></p> | <p>Gn07-23b And <i>most of</i> Noah remained in the ark.[Based on the translation <i>Akh = most of</i>. See rashiyomi.com/ach.pdf]</p> | <p>Many people translate <i>ach = only</i>. Rashi in fact acknowledges that people might translate the verse <i>only Noah and those with him remained</i>. However, the translation <i>ach=only</i> fits very poorly into most verses and is incorrect. Rashi says that Noah lost weight or was hit by a lion. Noah was diminished in the ark. This sounds crazy to take <i>Ach=only</i> as implying weight loss.</p> | <p>Rashiyomi.com/ach.pdf presents strong evidence that <i>ach</i> means <i>most of</i>. So it can mean <i>most of the time=usually, most of the time=probably, most of</i>, and other similar translations. The spontaneous reaction to the verbal statement <i>most of Noah remained in the ark</i>, is that <i>most of him remained</i>. This is a stage 1 argument; in stage 2, Rashi mentions several possibilities: a) Maybe the cold damp nights caused weight loss – so only <i>most of him</i> remained; b) Maybe an animal bit him – so only <i>most of him</i> remained. Note: English translations are due to King James and are not Sinaitic. So we have not in any way violated our tradition in so translating.</p> |
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| <p>Friday 8/21/201 5</p> | <p>Double Rashis – <i>Rashi may be commenting on two aspects of the verse. However even the Rashi commentators may notice one driving force in the verse. This can lead to confusion.</i></p> | <p>Dt16-15 Most of the time you will persistently be happy [on the holiday]</p> | <p>Rashi says # 1) You are not obligated to eat the happy peace offerings on the first day of the holiday; #2) You may eat the happy peace offerings on the last day of the holiday. Rashi appears fanciful since the word <i>usually</i> does delimit (the first night) but how does it expand the 2nd night (Gur Aryeh Rashi commentator)</p> | <p>#1) There are two drivers of comment in the verse. The biblical word <i>ach</i> means <i>usually, most of the time</i>. This word, <i>usually</i>, delimits, there is an exception. This is stage 1. Stage 2 takes the most reasonable possibility of limitation. If you just came from the weekdays at work you are not yet fully in mood on the first night of Yom Tov. So there is no obligation of the happy peace offering on the first night. #2) But the verb <i>to be</i> – <i>you will be happy</i> vs. <i>enjoy yourself</i> – always denotes persistence and emphasis. So there is an emphasis on the persistence of the happy peace offerings. This is stage 1. In stage 2 we specify that this expansion must refer to the night of the last day (Technically the night of the 8th is after the 7th and not part of the holiday). <i>You persist in happiness</i> by even being allow to bring the happy peace offerings on the night after the 7th day.</p> |
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We hope you enjoyed this special edition of Rashiyomi. In the next two issues we will continue what we started here by giving the Rashis on Ach and Indirect Objects. We wish to show that *is possible* to retranslate and make things *Peshat*.

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