

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on VaYayRaH
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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.

YEAR 2015-2016: *This year I am reviewing comments from the book Yosef Hallel, by Rabbi Brachfeld. This book studies original Rashi manuscripts: i) The first (printed) version (of Rashi), ii) Elkavetz, iii) Rome, iv) Zamorah, v) Soncino, vi) some handwritten manuscripts. (One can and should google these to find out about them; some of these are online (with others)). My goal this year is to show that the methods approach of the Rashi Newsletter, what is Rashi's method?, can yield the same insights as the textual approach. We believe this important since a doctrinal position of the Torah is that it should be accessible to everyone (Deut. 30:11-14). Manuscript analysis is only available to scholars while the Rashi methods used the Rashi Newsletter are accessible to everyone. I would say more but throughout the year each issue will elaborate on this point.*

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 Tue Oct 27, 2015 Gn18-21a, Gn11-05, Nu12-06a

Biblical Texts:

Gn18-21a, Nu12-06a, Gn11-05

- [Concerning the judgement of Sedom and Amorah, God says] I will go down and see if they have done according to the screams from it
- [Concerning Aaron and Miriam's discussion of Moses' separation from his wife] God came down in a cloud....He said please hear my words
- [Concerning the Tower of Bavel] I [God] intend to go down and see

Rashi Comments:

- This [God's descent and inspection of Sedom and Amorah] teaches us that a judge should not pass judgement until he personally inspects
- The biblical word na means please [Rashi's translation is in the text of the 2nd bullet]

Yosef Halel comments: [First some background. Whenever Rashi makes a comment he first cites a portion of the biblical text and then comments.

- The cited portion of the biblical text is called the *the beginning words* (That is the biblical text citation with which Rashi begins his comments). Typically, the *beginning words* are in bold.
- The *beginning words* are followed by the *body* of the Rashi

text.

With this background let us examine the current and first printed version of Rashi.]

Current Version of Rashi: I will go down: This teaches that a judge should not convict without personally examining the evidence.

First printed version of Rashi: I will go down *and see*: This teaches that a judge should not convict without personally examining the evidence.

Yosef Halel Contribution: As can be seen by the italicized words *and see*, the first printed version of Rashi adds to the *beginning words*, the biblical phrase *and see*. This is consistent with the *body text* since the biblical word *see* corresponds to the Rashi interpretation *examine the evidence*.

Yosef Halel adds: This Rashi is also consistent with the Divine descent mentioned by the Tower of Babel, **Gn11-05** where it says *I will go down and see*.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The Yosef Halel uses what we call the **Database** method. That is we examine many cases with a common feature and seek commonality and contrasts. The Yosef Halel examines 2 Divine Descents. The Rashi Newsletter examines 3 Divine Descents. We have listed three cases in the introduction of this Daily Rashi. Notice that in the **Nu12-05:06** Descent, God's descent to save Moses' honor, there is no word *see*. Rather there is the word *please*. The word *please* introducing the clause *please hear my words*, clarifies

that even though God is angry at Miriam and Aaron, He does not pronounce judgement immediately, until He states His reasoning and awaits for a possible response from Aaron and Miriam. Thus we see the *Judge examine first, sentence second* principle of Rashi.

Summary: The Rashi Newsletter and the Yosef Halel emphasize different methods

- Rashi Newsletter emphasizes *method*, commonality of content in several verses where there is a Divine descent. In all cases there is indication of a requirement of personal examination by the deciding judge. This common indication does not have to have common words.
- Yosef Halel emphasizes commonality of words (*see*) and emphasizes the form *the beginning words*. (Yosef Halel to be fair also emphasizes the value of Database confirmation).

We see the following contrast

- The Yosef Halel is based on a textual method: Seeking common words and inspecting Rashi form.
- The Rashi Newsletter is based on content and meaning. It therefore is able to include more illustrative examples.

Non-Verse-Daily Rashi Wed Oct 28, 2015 Gn18-32a

Biblical Texts: Gn18-32a

[Background: Abraham had prayed that God spare Sedom and Amorah if there were a) 50, b) 45, c) 30, d) 20, e)10 Righteous. Abraham only went down to 10 *if you find 10 people in the city will you not save the city*] He did not ask God to save the city if

he found more. Commentators seek to explain why Abraham stopped at 10.

Current Rashi text: And why did Abraham not pray that fewer than 10 righteous save the city? (Presumably) Because by Noah we find that 8 people - Noah, his 3 sons and their 4 wives - were not sufficient to save the world so Abraham did not pray *if you find 8 in Sedom will you spare the city.*

Alkavetz and Zemorah Rashi texts: Why did Abraham go down to 10? Because he reasoned that his nephew Lot, Lots wife, his 4 daughters and their husbands which presumably became righteous after marrying into Lots family were 10 righteous people in Sedom. That is Lot believed that there were at least 10 people there (Therefore he did not ask God to spare the city for 8 since he felt there were 10).

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter focuses on *methods*

- The issue of attributing psychological reasons to behavior is basically an attempt to use a source outside the Bible, psychology, to explain reasons for biblical texts. This is called the **non-verse** method. The non-verse method includes all justifications and support of biblical verses whether from geometry, spreadsheets, near-eastern languages or psychology or other sciences.
- Each Rashi method has a flavor: Certain methods are precise exact and exclusionary allowing only one explanation. Other methods invite multiple approaches. The **non-verse** method encourages multiple explanations. The caveat however is not to view disparate explanations as *controversy*. It is therefore a

mistake to say there are two conflicting opinions, two positions of two commentators. Rather we view all explanations as *supplementary* and non-conflicting.

- Summary: Thus we believe Abraham's knowledge of Lots family of 10 and Noah's family of 8 *both* contributed to his stopping at 10 and not going further.

This approach is important in understanding Rashi and the commentaries on him.

Grammar-Daily Rashi Thu Oct 29, 2015 Gn22-02b

Biblical Text: Gn22-02b

[Background: The biblical Hebrew root **Ayin-Lamed-Hey** has two meanings

- It can mean to *go up* as in *going up a mountain*
- It can refer to sacrifices as in *offer this up-offering*. [The offerings are called *up* since they ascend by fire upward].

With this background let us give two possible translations to the verse which deals with the famous Akaydah, God's command to Abraham to...:

- *take....Isaac to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him there for a sacrifice*
- *take....Isaac up to Mountain Moriah for the purpose of offering a sacrifice*

Notice how the two translations totally differ. The first bullet corresponds to the traditional translation of the Akaydah: God asked Abraham to sacrifice his own son, Isaac. The 2nd translation of the Akaydah is peculiar. There was no request for human sacrifice. There was request for an animal sacrifice with

which Isaac participated. But these *are* the two translations.

Now let us examine how Rashi chooses between the competing translations.

Current Rashi Text: God never said *slaughter Isaac*; rather God said *go up* [the mountain] *with Isaac*; God's intention was he should go up to make an offering of an animal and as soon as he went up he was asked to come down.

Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel compares the *the beginning introductory words* of the Rashi in the current Rashi text and the first printed Rashi text.

- **Current Rashi text:** *Go up*
- **First printed Rashi text:** *Go up there*

Yosef Halel now argues as follows:

- The Current Rashi Text seems to argue that the word *go up* is used rather than the verb *to slaughter*. But this couldn't possibly be the derivation since the Bible routinely uses the biblical root **Ayin-Lamed-Hey** which does mean both to go up and to slaughter. The Yosef Halel brings several examples (e.g. cf. **Lv17-08** and **Lv17-01:03**).
- The first printed Rashi text begins with an extra word: *Go up there*. The extra word *there* emphasizes that the translation should be to going to a physical place not to offerings.

But I can ask the Yosef Halel: Perhaps the three Hebrew words of the verse mean *Go up there for sacrificial purposes (to offer Isaac)*. How does the word *there* force us to reach this conclusion that they were commanded to go up the mountain to

offer a sacrifice (not Isaac)?

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi **Grammar** principle has an important subprinciple, the **preposition** principle. We all know for example that a terminal letter changes the meaning of a verb: e.g. **Shmarti, Shmarta, Shamar** mean *I watch, You watch, He watches*. What is not always taught is that the preposition that goes with a verb can also change its meaning. In English we do say *offer for a sacrifice* but we *never* say this in Hebrew. In Hebrew

- *Offer* is always followed by the preposition *as a*.
- The preposition *for* indicates general purpose not a specific sacrifice as in **Joshua 22:26** (the altar is *for* sacrifices) (In fact this is the one of the few places in the bible where we have the preposition *for* following the root **Ayin-Lamed-Hey**).

So the driving force of the Rashi is from the preposition: *for*. If

- Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac the verse would say *offer him there as a sacrifice*
- Abraham was asked to go up with him for sacrificial purposes the verse would say: *offer him for a sacrifice*.

Rashi's position is that Abraham was asked to go up the mountain with Isaac for sacrificial purposes but was never asked to sacrifice Isaac.

Grammar-Daily Rashi Fri Oct 30, 2015 Gn22-02b

This is a continuation of the last Daily Rashi. Many people when shown the above Rashi think it is homiletic fancy."How

does Rashi explain the explicit verse *And Abraham bound Isaac, took the knife to slaughter his son*. Similarly how does one explain the explicit verse *And the angel said "I swear by myself, says God, that since you have not withheld your son from me...."*

These are healthy and good questions. Note the *two* sides of the contradiction

- There are clear verses that Abraham was asked to slaughter his son and was willing to give up his son
- Rashi is absolutely correct about the **Grammar**. Abraham was never told to offer his son; he was told to go up to the mountain to offer a sacrifice not a son!

Certainly Rashi knew this. To fully understand this we have to explain certain things about prophetic visions. So in this posting we go lightly through some basics.

According to the Rambam, in the Guide, many prophetic visions refer to dreams not to physical states. Thus a physical donkey never spoke; rather Bilam (**Nu22-28**) had a dream during the night in which he smote his donkey and his donkey verbally responded to him.

So the first principle we must state is that **Gn22** was a dream. In the dream God told Abraham to go up the mountain and offer a sacrifice but instead Abraham, in the dream, tried to offer up Isaac and was stopped.

And why am I so sure that Abraham never tried to offer his son?

0 Because was a prophet with a high degree of prophecy. It is preposterous to assume that he believed in human sacrifice and his *greatness* was that he stopped. Indeed, if that was so, why should he be regarded as a great leader.

Let us proceed further. Abraham was promised that Isaac was his inheritor his Patriarch to follow him. As is well known, in all cultures, modern and ancient, leaders lead their disciples through a rigorous training schedule. They try and mold their disciples like them. They also forbid certain practices to them so they can have a good image.

Symbolically we would say that leaders

- *bound* their disciples (restrict them)
- *slaughter* (restrict them)

The message and test of the Akaydah, is that to be a good leader you have to be *available* but not impose on your disciples. You have to let them grow up their own way. We can summarize the symbolism of the Akaydah as follows

Verse	Symbol
<i>Take your son Isaac</i>	<i>Take your disciple who will follow you</i>
<i>Go up the mountain with him</i>	<i>Show him the heights of leadership</i>
<i>Offer a sacrifice (lamb)</i>	<i>Show him how to enable his people to follow him</i>
<i>But Abraham bound Isaac</i>	<i>Abraham thought he had to mold Isaac</i>
<i>Took a knife to slaughter him</i>	<i>Abraham thought he had to restrict Isaac</i>
<i>And the Angel said no</i>	<i>This is not the proper method of leadership</i>
<i>Angel promised Abraham reward for abstaining</i>	<i>True fruits of leadership come from letting disciples grow their own way</i>

In fact Abraham and Isaac turned out quite differently

- Abraham was the personification of *Chesed*, helping all people of all faiths and doing favors to them
- Isaac served God through politics, balancing two great superpowers, Yaakov and Esau,

As to the "test": I would respectfully submit

- None of us have an urge to sacrifice our children. Thus Abraham fails to be a good leader for us by not engaging in human sacrifice.
- But all of us try to mold our children. It is hard to let them grow up as they wish. For this we need Abraham as a role model.

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