

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on ChaYaY SaRaH
Vol 24#13 - 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.

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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**Meaning - Synecdoche-Daily Rashi Monday Nov 2 2015,
Gn23-09b**

Biblical Texts:

Gn23-09b [Background: Abraham was purchasing a burial plot for his wife. Ephron, the person from whom he is purchasing says] *400 shekel in full money*

Current Rashi Text:

With *full money* I will pay its worth; similar language is used when David purchased from Aravnah: *full money*

Rome, Zamorah, Sonsina, and Alkavitz manuscripts:

With *full money*: Complete worth.

Yosef Harel Contribution: The *current* Rashi text stating that *with full money I will pay its worth* doesn't seem to contribute anything since the unusual phrase *full money* is not explained. Contrastively, the *Rome* and other manuscripts explain that *full* means *complete*. In other words, since money consisted not of paper money as we have today, but of a weight of silver, *full money*, means *complete silver without blemish*.

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter teaches that the basic meaning method of Rashi has 10 forms. These 10 forms are universal in all languages. One of the 10 forms is the *figure of speech* method. *Synecdoche* and *metonymy* refers to naming something by a good example related it: So for example we use the word *honey* to refer to anything *sweet*; we e.g. use the word *America* to refer to the *people of America* even though

technically *America* refers to the land. In the Rashi at hand, we use the word *full* as a good illustrative example of *without blemish*. A non-full glass of water has *missing* water; *full money* refers to *complete money, silver without blemish*.

**Grammar- Connective *Daily Rashi* Tuesday Nov 3 2015,
Gn24-23b**

Biblical Texts:

Gn24-23b [Background: Eliezer had just met Rivkah who asked her if he could stay over and if there was food for the camels] She responded *there is also food for the animals; also room to stay over*

Current Rashi Text:

The Hebrew word in question refers to one stay...and she said to stay over several stays

First Printed Rashi Manuscript:

It adds the words *you can stay over with us several nights*.

Yosef Halel comments: Yosef Halel does what we have been doing in the Rashi Newsletter. He cites the classic Rashi commentators and then offers a different approach.

Yosef Halel cites the **Mizrachi**, and **Gur Aryeh**, two Rashi commentators, who attribute the Rashi rule to the conjugation used in the verse. They make a distinction between *laloon* and *lalin*.

Yosef Halel rejects this as obscure and suggests that the Rashi

rule used here was the **Grammatical Connective** rule: By saying *also a place to stay vs a place to stay*, the word *also* indicates surplus, a stay of several nights.

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter agrees with Yosef Halel. It contributes by providing the names of explicit rules:

- The Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh use the **Grammar-Conjugation** rule
- Yosef Halel uses what the Rashi Newsletter calls the **Grammatical-Connective** rule under which words like *also* always connote extraneousness.

The Rashi Newsletter gives a framework under which these rules can be understood.

Grammar- Puns *Daily Rashi* Wednesday Nov 4 2015, Gn24-39a

Background: Sometimes the biblical or other text will *deliberately* misspell a word so that it looks like another word. This creates a pun or double meaning to the text. Sometimes these puns are intended by the author as indicated by cues. The technical name for this is *metaplasms*. For a discussion of puns in biblical and secular texts see my article

www.Rashiyomi.com/puns.pdf

Biblical Texts:

Gn24-39a [**Background:** Abraham had instructed his servant Eliezer not to take a wife for his son Isaac from the Canaanites amongst which he lived. Abraham suggests a family from whom

Eliezer can get a wife for Isaac. Eliezer then asks what happens if she doesn't consent. The verse in question has a deliberate misspelling. By omitting one letter, two possible readings of the text result. They are]

- Perhaps the woman will not come with me
- To me [will Isaac come]

Current Rashi text: We explain the metaplasmus as follows: Eliezer had a daughter and he sought an excuse to get Abraham to marry his son to her. Abraham responded: My son is blessed while you are cursed and it is not proper marriage etiquette for a blessed person to marry a cursed person.

Elkavitz Rashi Text: This text adds: *Eliezer was a descendant of Canaan.*

Contribution of Rashi NewsLetter: The Rashi Newsletter makes two contributions

- It shows that in both secular and religious literature *puns* are a grammatical rule.
- The Rashi Newsletter classifies the Elkavitz manuscript as using a **non-verse** method.

In other words the Elkavitz manuscript answers *why?* Why does Abraham call Isaac blessed and Eliezer cursed? The answer is that Noah had 3 children, Shem, Cham and Yefeth. Shem was blessed and Cham was cursed. So Elkavitz states a Rashi conjecture that Eliezer was not *himself* cursed but rather a *descendant* of a cursed person, Cham. Abraham did not think it work out socially if Isaac a descendant of a blessed person, Shem, married the descendant of a cursed person, Cham.

Grammar- Conjugations Thursday *Daily Rashi* Nov 5 2015, Gn24-45a

Biblical Texts:

Gn24-45a [Background: Eliezer was retelling the story of how he met Rivkah] While I was completing my prayers, Rivkah had already come out

Contribution of Rashi NewsLetter: In both English and Hebrew verbs can refer to various times or time periods. Here are some examples from English

- **Past:** I ate the apple
- **Present:** I am eating the apple
- **Future:** I will eat the apple
- **Habitual Present:** I eat an apple every day
- **Gerund:** The eating of apples requires grinding teeth.

In each of the bulleted sentences there is

- **A conjugation:** ate, am eating, will eat, eat, eating
- **A meaning:** past, present, etc.

One job of grammar is to connect conjugations to meanings.

- English is rich: there is typically a one-one correspondence between conjugations and meanings
- Hebrew is poor in conjugations: Typically one conjugation is used for several purposes. This means that the reader must actively interpret the conjugation which can have several meanings.

With this background we can explore the Rashis.

Current Rashi text: Hebrew uses either the future or past conjugation to indicate the habitual past and gerunds. Hebrew has no present conjugation. Hence in this verse *while I was completing my prayers, Rivkah came out*, the present conjugation is used to indicate the gerund *completing*.

Rashi gives several examples. One of these examples is **Job 1:5** *...when the [children] party is over Job offers sacrifices because he says 'Maybe they sinned in their heart'*

The underlined word *says* is the habitual present similar to *I eat an apple every day*. The habitual present does not indicate something going on in the present but rather indicates, as its name indicates, a habit, something done (almost) everyday.

Elkavitz Rashi Manuscript: This manuscript cites Rashi as using another verse using the phrase *Job says: Job 34:5* [Elihu criticizes Job for] *Job says [habitual present] I am righteous and God has removed from me justice*.

Both manuscripts bring other examples. In the verse we are studying, **Gn24-25**, the Bible uses a future conjugation to indicate the gerund *completing*.

- A verb (generally) indicates an activity at a specific instant of time
- A gerund (like *eating*) indicates an *ongoing* activity.

**Meaning-Symbolism Friday *Daily Rashi* Nov 6 2015,
Gn24-63a**

Biblical Texts:

Gn24-63a *Isaac went out in the field to shrub towards evening*

Current Rashi text: *To shrub means to pray similar to the usage in Ps102:1 before God he spills his shrubs.*

A comment in an Old Rashi Manuscript: But the Ibn Ezra, Biblical commentator, explained the text according to its simple meaning *to shrub in the field means to take a stroll in the field amongst the trees* and this has similar usage to e.g. *all shrubs were not created (Gen 2) or his mother threw the baby underneath one of the shrubs (Gen 21).*

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:

- The Ibn Ezra's explanation appears sound and basic;
- contrastively, Rashi's explanation appears fanciful and homiletic.

Is there any way to defend Rashi as the simple meaning of the text? Is there anyway to refute the charming simple explanation of the Ibn Ezra?

The defense of Rashi is a primary goal of the Rashi Newsletter. The defense of Rashi is based on the symbolism method and may be found in the table below.

Sphere of thought	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5
Hebrew root	Aytz	Roeh -raayon	Melil - Milah	Agar-igereth	Seeach
Plant	Tree (bears fruit)	Pasture	Leaf	Gather (as in granary)	Shrub (Short plant)

Thought/speech	Advice (bears fruitful ideas)	Brain-storming	Word (a “leaf” of thought)	Letter (Gathering of thoughts)	Prayer with short terse phrases
Comments			Refers to <i>word</i> speech such as when excited. E.g. <i>Sarah! A baby body!</i> Said in words rather than sentences		In prayer, because of emotional distress one very often prays in phrases (shrubs) vs complete sentences

Table: Examples of plant-(thought/speech) duality

The idea of the table is that words which refer to the *plant world* also refer to the *thought-speech* world. Here are some examples

- The root *aytz* does not refer to any type of plant but rather to a tree. A tree is that member of the plant world that bears other objects (fruits). Similarly, *advice* is that type of thought or speech that bears end results. This is seen in the parallel English phrase *fruitful* ideas also showing the plant-thought duality.
- Similarly *mireh* refers to pasture; a piece of land where sheep can graze and pick up what they want without a commitment to any one thing. *Brain-storming* or *ideas* are mental pastures. They are fields of ideas where some may just hit the spot but you need not commit yourself to any one idea
- Similarly *agar* is to harvest or collect plants into a granary while an *igereth* is a sort of letter, a collection of ideas.

Using this we see that the verb form of *shrub*, *to shrub*, has nothing to do with walking, but must refer to something in the field of ideas and thoughts. *Shrub* prayer would refer to a state of agitation where a person talks in *shrubs*, *isolated phrases*. e.g. *God please help me; please help me to obtain food; help me to health etc.*

To recap both Rashi and Ibn Ezra dealt with a verb form of *shrub*.

- Ibn Ezra refers to an activity in the place of shrubs, such as strolling. But such an interpretation is inconsistent with other plant metaphors as shown in the above table
- Rashi's interpretation - *to shrub* is a form of prayer, is consistent with other plant-thought metaphors.

Acknowledgement: The above table occurs in an unpublished paper of mine, *The Sacred Letters*, submitted to annual Yeshiva University publication while I taught there. I do not know why it was rejected. The table is based on the symbolic methods of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

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