

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on ToLeDoTh
Vol 24#14 - 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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**NonVerse-Near Eastern Languages *Daily Rashi* Monday
Nov 9 2015, Gn25-20c**

Biblical Texts:

Gn25-20c Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rivkah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramaen, from Padan Aram

Current Rashi Text:

...And there are those who explain Padam Aram as the the *Aram fields* because the Arab word for field is Padan

Alkavitz Rashi manuscripts:

...And there are those who explain Padam Aram as the the *Aram fields* because the Arab word for field is AlPadan

Yosef Halel Contribution: The book cites the Rashi on the Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 82b where he clarifies that Arab words begin with the prefix *Al*. [So the point would be that the field was called *Alpadan*, and by dropping the prefix *Al* we obtain a Hebrew form]

Rashi Newsletter Contribution: The Rashi Newsletter contributes the classification of the Rashi Method as the **Non-Verse** method. In this case Rashi uses comparative near eastern languages to clarify a meaning. This method is also popular among secular scholars.

Alternatively we can use the Rashi **Reference** method to show that Laban's names were Arabic (e..g **Gn31-47**, Laban called the treaty place, *Yegar Sahadutha*, an Arab name)

Comment: To strengthen the Yosef Halel contribution, note that the English words like *Algebra*, *Algorithm*, come from the names of Arab scholars who introduced these subjects to the West.

Comment: We see here a very positive contribution of manuscripts.

Parallelism-Spreadsheet *Daily Rashi* Tue-Wed Nov 10,11 2015, Gn25-24a, Gn38-24a

Biblical Texts:

Gn25-24a [Rivkah] Her [gestation] months were complete, behold there were twins in her womb

Gn38-27 [Tamar] When she gave birth, behold there were twins in her womb

Gn38-24 After about 3 months, Judah was told: "Tamar has prostituted [because they noticed her pregnancy]"

Current Rashi Text: Comparing the Rivkah and Tamar texts we see that Rivkah had a complete gestation [9 months] while Tamar gave birth at 7 months.

Genesis Rabbah Formulation (Brought by Yosef Halel):

Comparing the Rivkah and Tamar texts we see that Rivkah had a complete gestation [9 months] while Tamar had an incomplete gestation. (So no numbers are given for the incomplete gestation)

Comment: Rashi frequently cites the Genesis Rabbah which is

one source for this comments.

Elkavitz Rashi Text: Comparing the Rivkah and Tamar texts we see that Rivkah had a complete gestation [9 months] while Tamar gave birth at 6 months and 6 days.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter has introduced the principle of *stages*. According to the principle of stages, a Rashi comment takes place in two stages

- First stage: There is the basic application of the Rashi method. The Parallelism of *when she completed her pregnancy* vs. *when she gave birth*, simply suggests as in the Midrash Rabbah formulation *complete vs incomplete* pregnancy. There is certainty about the first stage of comment since it is based on a comparison of texts and a sound method.
- Second stage: At the second stage there is debate about *how* the nuances of the parallelism apply. What is an incomplete pregnancy? 7 months is one reasonable approach since the Talmud assumes the 8-month babies are not viable while 7-month babies are (This is based on the medical science of their days). Not surprisingly we have a manuscript with 6 months and 6 days but we are not told how that number is arrived at. There is controversy about the 2nd stage of the Rashi comment. But this controversy does not contradict the objectivity of the 1st stage.

Contribution of Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel makes a brilliant attempt to defend the Rashi by citing **Gn38-24**, *after about 3 months, Judah was told that Tamar had prostituted (because the pregnancy was notable).*

Rashi comment: It was most of the first month, the entire 2nd month and most of the 3rd month.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The phraseology *after about 3 months*, vs. the more traditional phraseology, *after 3 months*, suggests that the duration was a little bit less than 3 months. This uses the Rashi **Grammar** rule. The phrase after about 3 connotes less than 3.

Contribution of Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel cites the **Gur Aryeh** Rashi commentary, who points out that the Rashi derivation is from the phraseology *after about 3 months*. Yosef Halel then uses the **non-verse** method which cites scientific facts about when pregnancies are noticeable

- An ordinary 9 month pregnancy is noticeable after 3 months
- We can formulate this, that a 9 month pregnancy is noticeable at the 1/3rd mark
- But then a 7 month pregnancy would be noticeable at the $7/3 = 2 \frac{1}{3}$ mark which could easily be 1 whole 2nd month, and two two-thirds months.

We can summarize the logic as follows

- Pregnancies are noticeable at the 1/3 mark (Derivation from the **Grammar** method *after about 3 months*)
- The **parallelism** method suggests that Tamar's pregnancy was incomplete
- The principle of *stages* simply suggests that her pregnancy was not 9 months but we don't know how long
- Since the pregnancy was noticeable after *about 3 months* we conclude that it was noticeable between 2 and 3 months which when multiplied by 3 would put the pregnancy at 7 months.

**Grammar Puns *Daily Rashi* Thur Fri Nov 12 2015,
Gn27-03d, Gn27-37b**

Biblical Texts: Gn27-03d

[Background: Isaac wanted to bless his son Esau. He therefore asks him to prepare a good meal for him so that he may bless him at the meal] *Take your sword, quiver and arrows, go out to the fields and hunt a hunte for me.*

Current Rashi Text: There is no current Rashi text on the deliberately misspelled word, hunte, with an extra, silent, terminal, *e* at the end. In Hebrew there is a silent Hebrew letter *hey* appended to the Hebrew word for hunt.

The Rome Rashi manuscript, Some Handwritten Rashi

Manuscripts: The biblical text has

- a pronounced form, without the *hey*
- a written form, with the *hey*

The extra *hey* is the fifth letter of the alphabet. Therefore the extra *hey* is a hint to the five procedures that a ritually qualified slaughterer must do when slaughtering an animal in a kosher way (For example, it must be a clean cut not a to-and-fro cut [perhaps because this causes the animal anguish as death is not immediate])

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: I frequently get asked about such Rashis. "Aren't such Rashis proof that Rashi (perhaps occasionally) engages in homily. How could this Rashi possibly be perceived as the simple straightforward meaning of the text?"

This is a good question. It is answered in my article, "Biblical Puns", Jewish Bible Quarterly, 34(3), pp 190-198, 2006. In that article I show that even in secular literature there is a considerable body of scholarship that regards puns as a grammatical rule intentionally used by authors to convey meaning. There are well defined rules for extracting meaning from misspelled puns. The technical literary name for this device is *metaplasms*.

In this case I would use the rule of *stages* discussed above. A suffix *hey* throughout the Hebrew language connotes the feminine aspect of something. As a simple example

- *Tzedek* means justice
- *Tzedakah* (*Tzedek* with a *hey*) refers to charity, the feminine form of justice.

Similarly here:

- The noun *hunt* refers to something hunted
- The noun *hunt* with a feminine suffix would refer to something hunted in a caring feminine manner.

This is stage one of the Rashi. The clearly intentionally misspelled word *hunt* with a suffix letter normally indicating feminine, would refer to *hunting in a feminine caring manner*.

Recall that stage two, of a Rashi comment, may have controversy but it is built on something solid and hence is part of the simple meaning of the text. One way of showing care during a hunt is to follow the rules of ritual slaughter: For example, a clean cut rather than a to-and-fro cut to avoid causing anguish. Similarly, the knife should not have rust as that

also slows the immediacy of death and causes anguish.

Thus we see, that this lost Rashi, is founded on literary principles that many scholars consider grammatical.

Biblical Text: Gn27-37b

[Background: Jacob stole the blessing from Isaac. Esau complains that he has no blessing. Isaac begins to ponder what he can give. He states:] But to youe where can it be found what I will do for you.

Comment: In the Biblical text, the word youe, is misspelled with a silent suffix *e*. In Hebrew the word is misspelled with a silent suffix *hey*.

Rashi text: Rashi simply translates the text. Note: The word *you* in Hebrew with a terminal *hey*, *looks like* the word for *walking*.

- The Hebrew word for *to you* is *lech*
- The Hebrew word for *walking* is *lechah*

So indeed Rashi had to translate to warn the reader against a mistranslation.

Yosef Halel comments: Yosef Halel brings in several other verses as well as Masoretic notes where the biblical word meaning *to you* is spelled with an extra terminal suffix *hey*. They can be found in: Isaiah 3:6, 2Sa18:22, Ps80:3.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: This extra silent terminal *hey* is another example of a metaplasmus, a deliberate misspelling by the author with the intent of conveying nuanced meaning.

Here also I would interpret the suffix *hey* which usually indicates the feminine form, as indicating a feminine aspect of *to you*. A beautiful example is found in French. When you say *how are you*, then

- If it is a person you don't know you use the French word, *vous*
- If it is a person you do know and are familiar with you use the French word, *tu*.

In other words, French has two forms of *to you* one connoting familiarity and one connoting distance.

The application of these two *to yous* makes perfect sense in both this verse and the other verses cited above by the Yosef Halel

- On the one hand, Isaac was being cold and informal with Esauv: "I am truly sorry, but what you want was given to the last customer; I can't help you"
- On the other hand, Isaac wished to convey to his son that he felt his pain and that he still regarded Esauv as his eldest son, hence the *caring to you* as indicated by the suffix *hey*.

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