

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on VaYiShLaCh

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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-Hononym *Daily Rashi* Tuesday Nov 24 2015,
Gn32-04a**

Biblical Texts: Gn32-02:04

- Jacob went on his path and met a caravan of Divine messengers (Angels)
- And Jacob said when he saw them: "This is a camp of Divine messengers (Angels) and he called the placed 'camps.'"
- And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esauv his brother

Background (Hebrew): The Hebrew word *Malach* which means messenger can mean

- Angel
- Human messenger

Of course the phrase *Divine malach* obviously means Angel. But in the biblical text above all 3 verses use the term *messenger* (Malach). In two of them, the adjective Divine is present, so it refers to Angels. What about the 3rd bullet: Did Jacob send

- Human messengers
- Angels

In this context we must clarify that Angels have two meanings. It can refer to

- The Angel visions one sees in dreams
- Humans who have the status of Angel-prophets

Rashi: The word *messengers* in the 3rd bullet refers to angels not messengers.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: A hononym refers to a single word that can have disparate meanings. For example, in

English the word *ruler* can refer to a measuring device or to a human ruler. Homonyms create ambiguity which must be resolved by awareness of the context of the surrounding text. In our biblical text, the word messenger is used 3 times; in two uses it clearly refers to angels since the adjective Divine is used. Rashi clarifies that in the 3rd instance it also refers to angels, presumably the angels he just met.

Rashi does not explain how the surrounding context implies this. I would simply say, that Jacob sent angels since Esauv couldn't kill them and he would at least get his message across.

Background on Rashi text: Before presenting the Yosef Halel, we mention some stylistic issues in Rashis. A Rashi comment has an *introduction* and *body*. The intro is a citation from the biblical verse commented on so the reader will know to what the comment body refers to. The intro is normally in bold and the comment body is in non bold. In our example we have the following

Current Rashi text: **Jacob sent messengers:** Actual Divine messengers, angels

First Printed Rashi text: **Messengers:** Active Divine messengers.

The two texts differ in the Rashi intro. Yosef Halel argues that the first printed Rashi text is more logical since what is being commented on is the word *messengers*. I disagree. Rashi is commenting not on an individual word but rather on the 3-fold occurrence of this word, *messengers* in the biblical text. Two of these occurrences refer to angels and the last one does also.

Therefore the current Rashi text is clearer since it in effect explains "The biblical text with *messengers* that begins *Jacob sent messengers* also refers to Angels." It was necessary, for Rashi to clarify which of the three '*messenger*' texts he is commenting on.

Formatting *Daily Rashi* Wednesday Nov 25, 2015, Gn25-04b

Biblical Texts: Gn25-04b

Esauv ran towards Jacob and ~~kissed~~ him

Contribution of the Rashi NewsLetter: The biblical text has dots over the word ~~kissed~~. These dots are the biblical equivalent of crossing out in modern formatting. There are 10 words in the bible with dots and in all of them we interpret the text to mean that the word is almost crossed out (that is, there is an aspect of the word that is not there). This illustrates the Rashi **Formatting** rule.

What does **Formatting** mean. To explain this, in English, various formatting, such as bold, italic, underline, strikeout, bullets convey non-verbal, non-specific (de)emphasis. If an author bolds a phrase you *know* they intended emphasis; but don't know *what* the emphasis is. This idea is developed in my paper *Biblical Formatting*, **Jewish Bible Quarterly**, 35(1), 2007.

With this background let us read the actual Rashi text.

Current Rashi text: The word ~~kissed~~ is dotted to indicate a deemphasis: Esauv did kiss him but the kiss was crossed out,

deficient; it was non-sincere. There is an alternate point of view on the (de) emphasis implied by the dots. Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai says: But it is a law, it is known that Esauv hates Jacob. So why do we need dots to tell us it was insincere (I would have known it anyway). Therefore we interpret the dots to refer to emphasis not deemphasis. The emphasis is similar to bold, italic or underline. The emphasis on the word *kissed* implies that this is the one time that Esauv really loved Jacob since he hadn't seen him in so many years.

First printed Rashi text: Is almost identical to the current Rashi text.

Yosef Halel comments: The underlined phrase but it is a law is very peculiar. You don't use the term *law* when referring to a known emotional disposition (Esauv's hatred of Jacob).

Yosef Halel continues: The book Zikaron brings a different Rashi text: *Is it not known that Esauv hates Jacob?*

In this case, the sole purpose of the alternate text is to remove some unpleasant phrases from an otherwise clear Rashi.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: Let us assume that the Zikaron version of Rashi is correct. Consider the phrase *but is it not known* in Hebrew

- **Vav - Hey - Lamed- Aleph** Space **Beth-Yud-Daleth-Ayin**
But the word for "It is a law" is spelled as follows
- **Vav - Hey - Lamed - Caph - Hey**

So the interrogative style *is it not known* is also peculiar. So

some scribe saw this strange phrase and substituted *it is a law* which phrase has the same beginning three letters.

We conjecture that this explains the scribal corruption of the current Rashi text.

Meaning-Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Thursday Nov 19, 2015, Gn35-18b

Background: Jacob and family were travelling away from Laban. Rachel had a difficult labor from which she died. The verse discusses the naming of the son she bore.

Biblical Text: Gn35-18a

As she was expiring because she died

- She named the son, Son of my travail
- His father called him, a) Son of the right b) Son of (full) days.

Comment: We have embedded the Rashi comment in the translation of the text.

Current Rashi text: *Son of the right*. In biblical Hebrew, *right* is one word for the south (Since as you go from west to east the south is on your right). Why (name him after the geographic location) Because this son was the only son born in Canaan which was in the south as you come from Aram Naharim where Jacob just left.

Hand Written Script of Rashi: Rabbi Hoshayah explained that

- The mother, because she thought she was dying, thought the child was a miscarriage and hence named him *son of my*

travail

- His father, however, call him, *son of (full) days*, because the child was alive and born in good health.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: Notice how

- The Hand Written Script of Rashi bases meaning on the **parallelism** method
- The first explanation in the current Rashi text uses the technique of **meaning of 4+-letter words**. These words typically are divided into a set of two words which read like a sentence. Thus this Rashi uses the **meaning** method.

Meaning-Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Fri-Sat Nov 27-28, 2015, Gn34-02b:07a

Biblical Text: Gn34-02b:07a

Schem, the son of Chamor, the Hivite, saw her[Dinah], seduced her, slept her, and tortured her....Jacob's sonsthey were very upset because it is disgusting....to sleep Jacob's daughter for this is not done

Rashi Text: The Biblical phrase tortured her refers to unnatural sex. The phrase this is not done means that the nations fenced themselves from the sexual prohibitions and prohibited raping virgins.

Comment: The root **Ayin-Nun-Hey** means to answer; it also means to causing pain (to make someone answer to you). In a sexual context it can mean

- Responsiveness (in the active tense)

- Rape (in the intensive tense (Piel); the idea of making a woman answer to you)
- General pain - Last week we saw based on the Talmud Yoma 57 that **Ayin-Nun-Hey** when used *in conjunction* with a statement of intimacy might mean abstention from further full intimacy (**Rashi on Gn31-50**).

Last week I referred to the two prepositions connected with sleeping as explained by the Malbim (**Lv15-24**).

- *Abe sleeps with Beth* connotes normal intimacy
- *Abe sleeps Beth* connotes a relationship where the woman is object but not participatory (hence the absence of the word *with*)

With this background let us review the verses and Rashi

- The verse mentions that Dinah was seduced (Later verses mention he spoke to her heart; promised her things the way people who are luring teenagers typically do)
- The verse uses the object form of sleep: *He Slept Dinah*. This doesn't mean rape just that she didn't get satisfaction from the relationship
- Since the verse says *he slept her, he ayin-nun-hey-ed her* we need not assume it means torture and rape. It could equally mean he refused to have further relations with her or (as Rashi says) he had unnatural relations (a euphemism for any type of non-full intimacy)
- Interestingly though Rashi begins with the phrase *rape virgins* when he describes while Jacob's sons were upset, Rashi continues with a much watered down version: *The nations fenced themselves concerning forbidden sexual relations. A*

fence is a rabbinic decree. Perhaps (to use a modern term), since rape is Noachide law and prohibited, perhaps, the nations prohibited statutory rape, seducing virgins (Since if they refused it could lead to rape) Notice that in English we use the term "Rape" in Statutory rape (having consensual intimacy with a person who is very young, say 12 or 13) even though the relationship may be consenting. It would emerge from this analysis that Dinah was not necessarily raped: She was a virgin and was seduced; she wasn't happy in her first relationship and he refused to follow up. Jacob's sons were angry not because she was raped but rather because she was seduced and the prohibition of doing this was a fence against real rape (where there is no consent)

- It follows that Jacob's children, Shimon and Levi had no right to destroy an entire city
- Jacob (end of **Gn34**) was infuriated at them; their defense was not that she was raped but rather treated like a prostitute (= object); again this is not a reason for destroying an entire city
- Jacob (**Gn48**) curses them in his fairwell blessings for uprooting the city and for what they did to Joseph.

This seems to be the simple meaning of the text and consistent with Rashi. Note: The purpose of Biblical narrative in Genesis is to provide role models. Certainly the idea of a virgin teenager being lured into romantic relationships with promises of happiness is very relevant today and this chapter provides several insights into how it happens and how certain responses are inappropriate.

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

