

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on VaYaySheV Vol 24#17 - 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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Paragraph *Daily Rashi* Wednesday Dec 2, 2015, Gn32-04a

Biblical Texts: Gn37-02b

This is the story of Jacob: Joseph was 17 years old: He sheperded sheep with his brothers and youthed with the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives.

[**Note:** There are several Rashi comments embedded in this one Rashi]

Rashi: Everything that happened to Jacob happened to Joseph.

- 1) Jacob's brother hated him and Joseph's brothers hated him
- 2) Jacob's brother tried to kill him and Joseph's brothers tried to kill him.

And many other similarities are listed in the Breishith Rabbah.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: Rashi here is using the **paragraph** rule which asserts that items in a paragraph are connected by the paragraph theme. Note the sentences in **Gn37-02**

- This is the story of *Jacob*
- *Joseph* was 17 years old and ...

How does Joseph's life story develop the central theme of Jacob's life story. Rashi answers this by noting that their life stories are similar.

Contribution of Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel points out that only two similarities of Jacob and Joseph are mentioned. But the Midrash Rabbah which Rashi cites lists several similarities. Yosef Halel concludes with the important point that the two

similarities cited in Rashi are *illustrative* of the general trend of similarities. Rashi did not mean to *exhaust* the similarities in just two points.

Comment: This is an important principle in studying Rashi. Rashi must be studied with the Rashi rules. If the Rashi rule (paragraph development) is more expansive and broad than the literal Rashi text (many similarities vs. two) then the Rashi text must be understood in light of that greater expansiveness.

Grammar Contradiction *Daily Rashi* Thursday Dec 3, 2015, Gn37-02b

Biblical Texts: Gn37-02b

This is the story of Jacob: Joseph was 17 years old: He shepherded sheep with his brothers and youthed with the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives

Rashi text: Youthed means he behaved like a kid: grooming his hair and communicating with his eyes...in order to look sharp.

Contribution of the Rashi NewsLetter: Rashi here is commenting on the word, underlined in the biblical text, youthed. Youthed is a verb form of the noun youth. Creating a verb from a noun is called a denominative. Other examples of denominatives in English are *to hammer*, *to eye*, *to flower*, *to dust*.

Pseudo-Rashi text: Yosef Halel brings down the Rashi like commentary on an almost identical verse in **2Ch34-03** where the comment is not on the word *youthed* but on the phrase *Joseph*

was 17 years old. The pseudo-Rashi comment is *Had he not been 17 he wouldn't have behaved that way.*

By way of background, Rashi created a genre of commentary: Namely to footnote the biblical text with words or phrases from the biblical text followed by terse comments. This is the appearance of the Rashi comment. Rashi did write his commentary on the Torah and Prophets and most of the written works. It is not clear if his commentary on Chronicles is his (although the person who wrote it ascribed it to Rashi).

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The pseudo Rashi is using the contradiction method

- **Gn37-02** Joseph was 17 years old: He youthed
- **Gn41-46** Joseph was 30 years old: He stood before Pharoh (and was appointed viceroy)

The resolution of the contradiction

- behaving like a kid
- behaving like a king

is achieved by ascription to age. At 17 Joseph behaved like any other ordinary teenager; however this not preclude him from becoming viceroy at 30.

The message here is that teenagers who behave like teenagers are not *lost*. It is possible that some of them will grow up and achieve great dignity.

Grammar *Daily Rashi* Friday Dec 4, 2015, Gn37-04

Biblical Text: Gn37-04b

The brothers saw that their father favored Joseph over the other brothers and couldn't spea'k peacefully

Rashi: *spea'k* means speak to him

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: There were no grammar books in Rashi's days. Rashi therefore had to teach what all students of Hebrew 101 know today. One of the known things of Hebrew 101 is that in Hebrew, unlike in English, you can indicate an object or indirect of an object of a verb using a single suffix letter. Hence

- **Daleth-Beth-Resh** means *to speak*

- **Daleth-Beth-Resh-Vav** means *to speak with-him*.

Contribution of Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel does the type of thing that we do in the Rashi Newsletter. He cites a *list*, numerous other Rashis where Rashi teaches this principle that suffix letters can indicate entire words connoting direct or indirect objects of speech. Rather than cite all of them here we will cite other examples in future issues as we go through this Parshah cycle.

For homework: A rather peachy example (suffix letter indicating (in)direct object) occurs in the Song of the Sea recited by religious Jews in their morning prayers every day. See if you can find this single example with two Rashi comments illustrating the above (**Ex15**).

Format-Paragraph *Daily Rashi* Sat Dec 5, 2015, Gn39-01a

Biblical Text: Gn37, Gn38-01:39-01

a) The brothers sell Joseph

b) Judah went down from this brothers and dwelled...

a') Joseph went down to Egypt

c) Potiphar's wife attempts to seduce Joseph

Current Rashi text: The three chapters have an a-b-a' sequence as shown. a and a' belong together: Brothers sell Joseph *who* went down to Egypt. But this paragraph sequence is interrupted with (b), Judah leaving. The interruption shows that Judah was punished with descent because of the descent he caused Joseph

Rashi text Gn38-01: *Judah went down*, (b), is said after the paragraph (a) *brothers sell Joseph* because the brothers pushed him down. They blamed the anguish of their father on the sale of Joseph which Judah talked them into: "If you, Judah, had not suggested this we would not have sold him."

Elkavitz Rashi text: Judah went down because of the descent of Joseph

First Printed Rashi Text: Because of it (the sale of Joseph) Judah went down.

Contribution of the Rashi newsletter: The paragraph rule simply asserts that paragraphs have a unifying theme. In this case, Judah's descent must somehow fit in to the sale of Joseph. There are two ways of tying in Judah's descent to the sale

- **Paragraphs b-a':** Judah was punished with descent for making Joseph descend
- **Paragraphs a-b:** Although the brothers did sell Joseph, they regretted it. They said it was a momentary flash of anger

which Judah took advantage of by advocating selling him. They turned on him and Judah left.

First notice that we can equally explain clause (b), the descent of Judah, by *either* the clause before it (the brothers sale of Joseph) or the clause after it (Joseph went down to Egypt).

Next notice: That both versions are present in the various Rashi texts.

Third: The Rashi newsletter does not seek the true Rashi text. The Rashi newsletter is based on rashi rules and methods not on texts. Since both explanations are equally plausible, both must be true. And in fact we can see both approaches in Rashi since the Rashis on **Gn38-01** and **Gn39-01** bring the two versions (because of the brothers, because of Joseph)

Fourth: It is "silly" to say that Rashi is making a comment on the common word *descent*. Rashi's comment is broad not superficial: Judah was punished with descent because of what he did to Joseph. Nevertheless, the common word descent is a punchy way of indicating this tie.

Fifth; Remarkably there is a (c) clause following (a') in the biblical text: The attempted seduction of Joseph by Potiphar's wife. Rashi ties that in to Judah's descent since Judah was "seduced" by his daughter-in-law. The Rashi Newsletter also sees this as retribution. In effect Rashi is saying:

Everything that Judah did to Joseph happend to Judah

- *Joseph was seduced by Potiphar's wife*

- *Judah was seduced by his daughter in law*
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- *Judah pushed Joseph away from this family*
- *Judah was pushed away from his family by his brothers.*

This seems to be the simplest way to take these Rashis: Not as plays on words but as deep but simple connections, the retribution connection.

Meaning *Daily Rashi* Sunday Dec 6, 2015, Gn38-14a

Biblical Text: Gn38-14a

[Background: Tamar is angry at her father-in-law for not allowing her to marry his son. She is tied up and can't marry anyone because she has to wait for him to grow up. So she decided to seduce him and must make sure she is not recognized] She covered herself with a veil and draped it (around her)

Current Rashi text: She Draped it around her, to make sure her father-in-law did not recognize her.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The issue here and with all the Rashis is the meaning of the biblically rare root **Ayin-Lamed-Pay**. This uses the Rashi **meaning** method. To make things clear we first present the Rashi NewsLetter unified meaning of **Ayin-Lamed-Pay**. We show how this meaning fits all verses. We then bring in translations of the Radack, Rashi, Ibn Ezra and the Aramaic translation.

The idea of finding a unifying meaning to a root is an approach advocated by the Rashi Newsletter. In this case we translate

Ayin Lamed Aleph = *Draped, looking draped over*

The Table below compactly describes how Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashi Newsletter and the Aramaic translation translate various verses

Verse/Commentator	Rashi Newsletter	Radaq	Rashi	Ibn Ezra	Oonkelos	Yon
Gen 38:14	She covered herself with a veil and <u>draped</u> herself	She covered with a veil and <u>wrapped</u> herself	She covered with a veil <u>wrapped</u> in it (so no one would recognize her)	She covered with a veil and <u>hid</u> herself	She covered with a veil and <u>bedecked</u> herself	She with dres (wra hers
Songs 5:14	His belly is a marble slab <u>draped</u> with gems	His belly is a marble slab <u>wrapped</u> with gems	His belly is a marble slab <u>bedecked</u> with gems	His belly is a marble slab <u>hidden</u> with gems		
Amos 8:13	The virgins <u>draped</u> over from the famine	The virgins <u>exhausted</u> from the famine	The virgins <u>exhausted</u> from the famine			
Isa 51:20	Your children are <u>draped</u> , lying in the gutters	Your children are <u>exhausted</u> (worn out), lying in the gutters				
Ez. 31:15	All field grass <u>drape</u> over on him	All field grass is <u>exhausted</u>				
Jonah 4:8	The sun struck him and he <u>draped</u> himself and asked to die	The sun struck him and and <u>exhausted</u> him	The sun struck him and <u>exhausted</u> him and he asked to die	The sun struck him and he <u>hid</u> himself in his garments		

Let us make some comments on this table

- The Radaq introduces the idea of two meanings: *Exhausted* and *wrapped*. Hence the solid black line dividing the two sets of verses

- Rashi comments twice on **Gn38:14**. On Gn38:14 he mentions "so no one recognizes her" and apparently translates as "*wrapped*". But Rashi references **Gn38:14** on **Songs 5:14** where he translates "*bedecked*".
- So Rashi himself uses two different translations, *wrapped* and *bedecked*. Additionally the Radaq identifies a meaning of exhaustion. We could just accept these different translations (and Yosef Harel offers some ingenious explanations on why Rashi uses two explanations for the same verse)
- The Rashi newsletter contends that the fundamental meaning is *draped* or *form of draped*. A semantic rule says something can be named by its form (for example *surfing* the web, or *pentagon*) But then an exhausted worn out person indeed looks like a spread drape; he is draped out. Accordingly we believe that the fundamental translation of **Gn38:14** is *she [both] covered herself with veil and draped it around her*. Rashi then explains *so that no part of her face should be visible since her father in law might recognize her*.
- We can then explain the Radaq's two meanings *exhausted* and *wrapped* as both coming from *Draped*. Finally we can explain the Ibn Ezra's *hide* as a consequence of *wrapping and draping*.

The idea of approaching things through a unified explanation is facilitated using the Talmudic methods of the Briske school which also sought unifying meanings.

Regarding our approach of unified meaning: There are two schools of thought on dictionaries: Some prefer dictionaries list as many meanings as possible while some prefer a unified approach. The Rashi NewsLetter prefers a unified approach *with*

many meanings.

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
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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
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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)
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IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited
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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.
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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
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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)
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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
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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.
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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