

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on SheMoTh
Vol 24#21 - 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 Synonym *Daily Rashi* Thur Dec 31 2015, Ex02-23b

Biblical Texts: Ex02-23b

[Background: The Jews had been enslaved in Egypt]

In those days the King of Egypt died; and the Jews groaned from the [continued] hard work

Current Rashi text: He didn't actually die but rather became leprous; to cure himself he would bathe in the blood of Jewish babies which he would slaughter.

Contribution of Vilna Gaon as cited by Rabbi Boncheck in his new book "Rashi: The Magic and Mystery":

The Gaon states that the title *King* is never used where speaking about someone's death. Since however the verse says *The King of Egypt died* it follows that he did not actually die. Instead he had an illness which made him considered dead (Throughout the Talmud, leprous people are considered dead). As for the clause that he slaughtered Jewish babies, this is simply a reasonable continuation of Pharaoh's killing of babies (throwing them in the Nile) mentioned in Chapter 1.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The contribution of the Rashi Newsletter is to classify this as a grammatical rule.

Synonyms *Daily Rashi* Friday Jan 1st 2016, Ex01-07a

Biblical Texts: Ex01-07a

[Background: The bible describes the generation of Jews in Egypt]

And the Jews

- were fruitful
- swarmed
- multiplied
- were strongly established
- very
- very much

Current Rashi text: On the word *swarmed* Rashi says *they gave birth to sextuplets*.

First Printed Rashi: *They gave birth to sextuplets sextuplets*.

Yosef Halel Contribution:

- *Sextuplets* means one birth of sextuplets (but the other births were not necessary sextuplets)
- *Sextuplets sextuplets* means *each* birth was sextuplets

Rashi derives the sextuplets from the use of six verbs (as shown in the bulleted list)

Elkavitz Rashi text: Each of the words

- fruitful
- swarmed
- multiplied

implies 2 children, yielding a total of $3 \times 2 = 6$.

Contribution of Midrash Rabbah and Tanchumah: Since

there are 6 verbs and each one means 2 we have 12 children per birth.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The issue is *how* Rashi derived the sextuplets. Notice that the derivation is attributed to a play on verbs - 6 verbs, 6 children. This is not rule based. It is also unsatisfying.

The Rashi Newsletter uses the **meaning-synonym** rule. Each of the 4-6 verbs in the bulleted list connote lots of children. Let us explore the nuances

- *fruitful* like a tree with many fruit
- *swarmed* many many offspring
- *multiplied* from the root Rav as in Rabbi, connoting children who followed their ancestral traditions
- *were strong* even though there were many children they were healthy and strong.

This explains why Rashi listed his explanation on *swarmed*, since it is the verb connoting many children.

Perhaps you will object that it doesn't explain why Rashi chose sextuplets. But I am indebted to my sister for that. She pointed out that Moses father, Amram, did not have 6 children, only 3 (Moses, Aaron, Miryam). Thus

- The main driver of Rashi is the nuances of *swarmed* which means lots of children
- The use of *sextuplets* is not something intrinsic but just a play on words. The real meaning is that the Jews multiplied alot.

Grammar - Conjugation *Rashi* Saturday Jan 2, 2016, Ex01-17a

Biblical Texts: Ex01-17a

[Background: The King of Egypt had ordered all male children murdered. But the midwives did not comply]

- The midwives feared God; they did not do what the King ordered, *they let the children live* [**Vatechayenna**]
- The king called the midwives and asked them: Why have you done this thing; *you let the children live* [**Vatechayenna**]

Old Rashi manuscript: Notice how

- The same Hebrew word, **Vatechayenna**
- Is used to indicate both, second person *why did you let the children live*
- And third person: *they let the children live.*

This is a grammatical rule (Which you can find in all modern textbooks). The plural 2nd and 3rd person (you, they) have identical conjugations for the female gender.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter classifies this as the grammatical conjugation rule

Contribution of Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel brings several variant Rashi texts and shows how corruption set in in the Rashi text. He also identified the one Rashi manuscript where Rashi's comments are consistent with modern grammatical theory.

Grammar *Daily Rashi* Sunday Jan 3, 2016, Ex01-20a

Biblical Texts: Ex01-20a

[Background: King of Egypt had decreed that male babies were to be murdered. The midwives refused to comply and invented an excuse (so that the King should not execute them)]

- Since the midwives feared God [they refused to kill the babies] God made them household names in Israel
- God did good to the midwives and the nation multiplied alot

Current Rashi text: Rashi begins with an explanation of a grammatical rule.

First recall that Hebrew grammar is based on three letter roots. We can denote these roots by 1,2,3. So a 1-2-**Hey** verb denotes a root whose third root letter is Hey and whose first two root letters are arbitrary. An alternative way of indicating these verbs is to use the three letters in the Hebrew word for root: **Paal, Pay, Ayin, Lamed**. Thus a **lamed hey** verb means that the third root letter (The letter in the position of lamed in **Paal**) is a **hey**. We will use the modern 1-2-**Hey** notation since it is easier.

Rashi gives the following rules for conjugation of a 3rd person past of a 1-2-**Hey** root

- If the verb is active you use the form **VaYeePhen (Patach (ah), Chirik (ee), Segol (Eh))**. Using Silverman's grammatical konkordance shows 16 examples in all of Tanakh. We list a few: **Gn25:34, VaYeeVhen**, He built; **Ex32:20, VaYeeZher**, He sprinkled; **Gn33:19, VaYeeKhen**, He bought
- If the verb is causative you use the form **VaYehGhel, Patach (ah), Segol (Eh), Segol (eh)**. Using Silverman's grammatical

konkordance we find 7 examples and list a few. **2Ki17:6**, **VaYehGhel**, He caused them to exile; **Ps105:24**, **VaYehFher**, God caused the Jewish people to be fruitful; **2C21:11**, **VaYehZhen**, He caused them to deviate from God.

- After stating this rule, Rashi explains the word occurring in our verse **Ex01-20: VaYeyThev**: God caused good to the midwives.

Yosef Halel's Contribution: Yosef Halel cites several other Rashis discussing grammatical rules: You can find them at **Gn07:23**, **Judges15:4**, **2Ki17:06**, **Lamentations02:08**. In all these other places Rashi makes explicit that the rule he cited only applies to **1-2-Hey** verbs (Rashi did not make this explicit on **Ex01-20**; I however added it since this will be our final conclusion). Furthermore, the examples cited in these places do not include the **VaYayTev** of this verse.

Yosef Halel notes that the commentators on Rashi gave lengthy explanations. The problem is that the root of **VaYaYThev** in **Ex01-20** is **Yud-Tet-Beth**. So **Ex01-20** is a **Yud-2-3** root not a **1-2-Hey** root. How then can Rashi cite a rule about **1-2-Hey** roots and apply it to a **Yud-2-3** root. As mentioned this caused severe problems.

The Rashi NewsLetter offers the following explanation

- We translate **Ex01-20** as *God did good for the midwives*. But the God that God did is mentioned in the verse before: He made them into households. In **Ex01-20** it says *God did good for the midwives; the people multiplied alot*. In other words, the good that God did is that He allowed the midwives to *continue* midwifing and give birth to children (and hence the

nation multiplied). But this is not "doing good" or "fixing." If you allow a person to *continue* doing what they did you are *maintaining* them; you are not *fixing them up* or *doing good*.

- It emerges that causative words with good can have two meanings
 - It can mean *fixing something up* or *making it good* as in **Jer2:33** *How much you must fix your ways*
 - It can mean *maintaining something* as in our verse **Ex01-20**: *God maintained the midwives so the nation multiplied*
- Since there are two meanings of causing good it is reasonable that there are roots
 - **Yud-Tet-Beth** is the root for causing good, for fixing
 - **Tet-Beth-Hey** is the root for maintenance.
- I have actually checked all occurrences of **Yud-Tet-Beth**: This verse **Ex01-20** is the only one where it means maintenance. It follows that Rashi's position is that in this verse **Ex01-20**, the root is **Tet-Beth-Hey**, a **1-2-Hey** root, and the principle he mentioned applies.

This example is particularly illustrative of the superiority of Rashi's methods over those of Biblical scholarship. Rashi did not hesitate to review underlining meanings and note that this is the one **Tet-Beth-Hey** root. We should also note that if the root is **Yud-Tet-Beth** then the conjugation in the causative should not be **VaYayThev**. We see here how improper analysis leads to corruption of the biblical text and lack of nuanced understanding while proper analysis gives full nuances without any textual corruption.

Database *Daily Rashi* Monday, Jan 4, 2015, Ex02-15c

Biblical Text: Pharoh wanted to kill Moses, so Moses fled Pharoh and sat on a well

Rashi: He sat on a well like Jacob who found his wife near a well.

Yosef Halel: Yosef Halel brings in other manuscripts as well as the Midrashim on which Rashi based himself:

He sat on a well like Jacob and Eliezer who found wives near a well.

Contribution of Rashi NewsLetter: Rashi is using the **Database** method. The **Database** method seeks comparable examples to a target text. It is an important principle in understanding Rashi that Rashi is not justified because of coincidences. Rather Rashi is justified by many cases supporting a given principle. Hence giving more examples lends credibility and reasonableness to a Rashi comment.

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) *Don't 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