

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on BeShaLaCh
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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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Grammar-Parallelism Method *Daily Rashi* Thur-Fri Jan 21st-22nd 2016, Ex14-10b, Ex19-02b

Biblical Texts: Ex14-10b, Ex19-02b

[Background: The first verse speaks about the pursuit of Egypt on the Jews who were fleeing Egypt. The 2nd verse speaks about the arrival of the Jewish people at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah]

- And they [Egypt] pursue them [the Jews];
- they overtake them camped by the sea;...
- Pharaoh came near [to the Jews];
- The Jews looked up and behold: Egypt pursues them

- They [the Jews] travelled from Refidim;
- they came to the Sinai desert;
- they camped in the desert,
- he, the Jews, camped opposite the mountain

Current Rashi text:

He-They: *The Jews camped with one heart like one person*

Pursue-pursues: *The Egyptians camped like one person with one heart*

Contribution of Rabbi Boncheck: Rabbi Boncheck in his new book, *Rashi: The Magic and Mystery*, explains this Rashi as due to Grammar, the use of a singular predicate with a plural subject. The singular predicate indicates a unified position.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: We object to the

sufficiency of Rabbi Boncheck's grammatical explanation. After all if a subject is a nation then it is permissible to use a singular predicate! Although the use of a singular predicate with a plural subject *hints* at some type of unity, the real driver of the Rashi comment is the parallelism method which sharply contrasts three *theys* with one *he* and similarly sharply contrasts *pursue-overtake* with *pursues*. For this reason we have classified these Rashis as using both the Grammar and Parallelism methods.

Further Contribution of Rabbi Boncheck: The purpose

- Of the Rashi Newsletter is to focus on how to go from the Biblical text to a Rashi comment
- Of Rabbi Boncheck is to both focus on biblical-Rashi comments as well as study Rashi's phraseology.

In this case Rashi has a subtle contrast in his two comments

- **Ex14-10b**, *Like one person, with one heart*
- **Ex19-02b**, *With one heart, like one person.*

Rabbi Boncheck explains that

- **Ex14-10b**, talking about a military operation emphasizes *one person* first
- **Ex19-02b**, talking about acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai, emphasizes *one heart* first

This explanation of Rabbi Boncheck is in fact a traditional (and beautiful) aspect of Rashi study: *How does Rashi take existing Midrashim and reformulate them. What are the reasons for changes in phraseology.* Rabbi Boncheck in fact has an entire chapter in his book on gems like the one we just cited.

Why then does the Rashi Newsletter not engage in such

practices? Because, the primary purpose of the Rashi Newsletter is to expose readers to the 10 basic skill categories needed to read a Biblical text and create, by themselves, a Rashi-like comment. Although alot more can be done with Rashi, our focus is on enabling readers to acquire these 10 basic skill categories, the 10 Rashiyomi, rules and be able to derive Rashi-like comments themselves.

Grammar *Daily Rashi* Sat Jan 23rd 2016, Ex15-01a

Biblical Texts: Ex15-01a

Then Moses and Israel will sing this song to God [in praise for God destroying the Egyptians at sea]

Current Rashi Text: *will sing* should be interpreted subjunctively, *wished to sing*.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter explains this using concepts of *subjunctive* and *habitual present*. Here is some background

- The verb *eat* in the sentence *I eat an apply every day* is not in the present but rather in the habitual present. The habitual present is a tense indicating ongoing activity.
- A parallel example in the bible is **Job 1:5**, *This is the way Job will behave every day*. Rashi explains that the future conjugation *will behave* should be interpreted as the habitual present: *This is the way Job behaves every day*.
- Further clarification of interpretation of the *future* as the *habitual present* is provided by the fact that in English there are 14 conjugations and 14 tenses (senses of verbs) while in Hebrew there are still 14 tenses but only 2 conjugations (past

and future). The Hebrew interpreter must know how to re-interpret past and future conjugations based on context. In **Job 1:5**, the phrase *every day* indicates a habitual activity and therefore the *future conjugation* is interpreted as a habitual present. This appears strange until we remember that Hebrew only has two conjugations; it does not have a separate conjugation for habitual present.

- But now a problem arises. **Ex15-01** states *Then Moses and Israel will sing this song*. The word *then* indicates immediately not in the future. Furthermore, as Rashi says *I can't explain Then Moses will sing the same way we explain This is the way Job behaves* since the song was sung only once, not habitually.
- Rashi therefore explains the future conjugation, *Then Moses and Israel will sing*, as indicating the *subjunctive* tense. Rashi therefore translates **Ex15-01** as follows: *Then Moses and Israel wished to sing this song*.

Elkavitz, Rome and Soncina Rashi Texts: Rashi's last point is phrased as follows: *But I can't explain Then Moses will sing the same way we explain thus will Job do every day*. Current Rashi texts begin *But they can't explain...*

Yosef Halel explains that *they* has no reference here and *I* makes more sense. So the textual emendation is correct.

Meaning-Idiom Daily Rashi Sunday Jan 24, 2016, Ex17-16c

Biblical Text: Ex17-16c

[Background: The Jews had just defeated Amalayk who attacked them when they left Egypt. God curses Amalayk]

...There is a war for God on Amalayk, from-generation-generation.

Rashi (Found on Isaiah 34:10) (Paraphrased): *From-Generation-generation* is an **idiom** meaning *recurring in different generations*. Thus we find attacks on Amalyk by a) Moses, b) Saul, c) Mordechai (Purim) and of course d) King Messiah.

Contribution of Yosef Halel: The above Rashi is not found in Rashi's commentary on Exodus. Rather the explicit comment on **Ex17-16** is found in **Isiah 34:10**. One of the nice things of the Yosef Halel commentary is his bringing in Rashis from the rest of the Bible illuminating passages in the Torah itself.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: There is a tendency in Rashi commentators to use the *extra word* approach. Thus they might say *for this generation* would only refer to Moses' war on Amalayk. *From Generation generation* has an extra word, (generation is repeated twice) and this indicates a multiplicity of generations.

Contrastively, the Rashi Newsletter, does not use the *extra word* rule. The Rashi Newsletter explains this Rashi as an **idiom**, part of the **meaning** method. An **idiom** is a collection of words whose meaning transcends the collective meaning of the individual components. Thus Rashi explains that phrases with repeated generations refer to recurring events in several generations. Rashi says this on Isaiah where the phrase *from generation to generation* occurs.

Having explained the Rashi, we observe that the observation of repeated generation contributes to the etymology of the idiom. But Rashi was not explaining the etymology (rather we read Rashi this way). Rashi is explaining the meaning of the **Idiom**, that is, he is explaining that the collection of words *from generation generation* means *recurring periodically in different generations*.

Meaning-Hononym *Daily Rashi* Monday Jan 25, 2016, Ex17-12d

Biblical Text: Ex17-12d

[Background: War on Amalayk. Moses would lift his hands up (in prayer) and the Jews would be encouraged and succeed.] *And Moses hands were heavy, [so] they took a stone and placed it underneath and he sat on it; his hands were faithfull until sunset.*

Current Rashi Text: *Moses hands were held upward to heaven in prayer, faithful and founded.*

Old manuscript text: *The word faithful means stable and permanant... Some similar verses are*

- Your house is faithful before me [said to King David] (faithful here means stable) **2Sam07-16**
- Faithful wounds and bad faithful illnesses (Faithful here means stable, that is, chronic) **Dt28-59**

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter contributes the classification that this uses, the **hononym** method. One word that has multiple meanings. In this case the

Hebrew word *amen*, has the following meanings

- faith, dependence
- nursemaid, sculpture (endowing a being's totality)
- stable and permanent

The Rashi Newsletter as do modern scholars use Database inquiries into word occurrence to justify the varied meanings of a word.

In passing, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch saw a unifying meaning of *intensity*.

- *Faith* means *intense dependence* your whole being (not one part of it) is seen as dependent on another
- the nursemaid and sculpture intensely create another being who are dependent on them
- The meaning of stability is consistent with a nuance of intensity indicating permanence.

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