

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on YiThRo
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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 28st-29th 2016, Ex14-10b, Ex19-02b

We repeat this Rashi pair from last week since it is relevant to the current parshah

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 thee 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. We argue that the very sharp contrast of singular vs. plural in one verse heightens the implications of the singular.

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.

Formatting-Consecutive Paragraphs *Daily Rashi* Sat Jan 30th 2016, Ex18-13d

Biblical Texts: Ex18-13d

- *The next day, Moses sat to judge the nation; the nation stood on Moses from morning to evening.*
- *And his father-in-law said, "This is not good, what you do; you will wear out, also you and also the nation with you"*

Current Rashi Text: There is no current Rashi text commenting on the consecutive verses (bulleted above). Why does verse #2 occur after verse #1. What is their connection?

Elkavitz and Zamora Rashi Text: Rashi adds an explanation of the consecutiveness as indicated by the underlined words

- *The next day, Moses sat to judge the nation; the nation stood on Moses from morning to evening, because he had no one to help him*
- *And his father-in-law said, "This is not good, what you do; you will wear out, also you and also the nation with you" [His*

father-in-law then suggested that Moses use a hierarchical system of judges to assist him]

By adding the phrase *because he had no one to help him*, Rashi explains the consecutiveness of the verses. The act of Moses judging all day implied he had no help and therefore his father-in-law suggested he obtain help.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter classifies this Rashi as explaining consecutive verses and paragraphs. This is part of the **Formatting** rule. The **Formatting** rule deals with non-word aspects of the text such as underline, bullets and paragraphing. The fact of consecutiveness implies causality or contrast.

Meaning-Connective Words *Daily Rashi* Sunday Jan 31, 2016, Ex18-18b

Biblical Text: Ex18-18b

[Background: See the last/yesterdays Rashi. Moses' father in law pointed out that if Moses continued doing all work he would wear away]

You will wear away

- *also* you
 - *also* your nation with you
- because it is too much for you to do this [judging all day] by yourself*

Current Rashi:

- *Also* you - you and Aaron and Chur
- *Also* your nation - the nation and its leaders

Handwritten Rashi text:

- Also you - you and Aaron ~~and Chur~~
- Also your nation - the nation and its leaders

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter classifies this rule as a **Meaning** rule, the **Connective Subwords** rule. This rule explains how certain words - *also, because, if-then, and, or, usually, only* - influence sentence meaning. The term *connective* words is the name the Radaq gave these words. In modern parlance they are typically *conjunctions* and *adverbs*.

The word *also* always, as in English, indicates something extra. However, the implimentation of this extraness requires common sense

- Who is *extra* to Moses in judging? Most plausibly, Aaron, the High Priest
- Who is *extra* to the nation in needing help? Most plausibly, their leaders

The position of

- The Rashi Newsletter, is that the implementation of the Rashi rule - *also* = *extraness* - can be successfully accomplished by logic
- Yosef Halel, is that the implementation of the Rashi rule must be accomplished through traditions and there may be controversies.

In this particular case, we see problems with the Tradition

method. Current Rashi texts list Aaron and Chur as assisting Moses. But Chur was murdered and should not be here! One must then seek other Rashi manuscripts which do not mention Chur.

Contrastively, the Rashi Newsletter is quite happy to take the principle - *also* = *extraness* - and simply derive that *extra* to Moses was the person who worked with him, Aaron while the *extra* to the nation were the people who worked with them, their leaders. The possible corruption of a text that adds something extra doesn't bother the Rashi Newsletter since the Rashi text is read within a context of the underlying Rashi method.

Database-Meaning *Daily Rashi* Monday Feb 1st, 2016, Ex17-12d

Biblical Text: Ex18-01b

And Jethro, Moses' Father in law heard all that God did to Israel....

Current Rashi Text: *Jethro had seven names-*

- *Yether (Extra)* - because he added a Parshah (this one) to the Torah
- *Yehtro* - when he converted they added an extra letter to his name (the "o")
- *Chovav (endearment)* - because he found the Torah dear

Zamora Rashi text, Mechilta, Citations of Rashi from a book, Yosif Daath: *Jethro had seven names*

- *Yether (Extra)* - because he added a Parshah (this one) to the Torah)

- *Yehthro* - when he converted they added an extra letter to his name (the "o")

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- *Reeuayl* - a friend (*Reah*) of God (*ayl*)
- *Chever* - a friend (*chever*) to God

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- *Chovav* (*endearment*) - because he found the Torah dear
- *Keni* - either a) a zealot (*kna*) for God (He established a monotheism society), or, b) he acquired (*kna*) a religion (he converted)

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- *pooteayl* - he formerly fattened (*puti*) animals to gods (*ayl*) (He worshiped idols prior to becoming religious)

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter classifies this as using two methods

- The **Database method**, since one must search the Bible for references and names to Jethro
- The **Meaning method**, since one must then justify each name of Jethro in terms of something he did

Note the difference in approach between the Rashi Newsletter and Yosef Halel

- The Rashi Newsletter is *method* based. Once the idea of a **Database** query is established one can find 7 names to Jethro and then it is straightforward to explain each one based on the etymologies
- Contrastively Yosef Halel is *text* based. If the current Rashi text only has 3 of Jethro's names then the only way that

deficiency can be remedied is to find an alternate text, either a Rashi text, or a Midrashic source for Rashi, that supplies the other four cases.

Note, the Rashi Newsletter frequently advocates a *workbook* approach to Rashi. One should *fill in* the Rashi text by using his method, following his examples and completing them. This is a modern pedagogic approach in which the student (the reader of Rashi) is not passive but actively participates in the learning experience.

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