

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on Ki-TiSSaH
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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 *Daily Rashi* Thur Feb 25th 2016 Ex32-32c

Biblical Texts: Ex32-32c

[Background: Moses went to heaven to receive the Torah. Meanwhile, the Jews created a golden calf and worshipped it. Moses rebuked them and is now praying for mercy on the Jewish people]

And now: If you forgive their sin [fine]; if not, erase me from the book you wrote

Current Rashi text: *The verse phrase book you wrote refers to the Torah. Moses' request was "If you don't forgive the Jews, I don't want people saying on me that I could not successfully request mercy on them. Therefore erase me from the Torah."*

Rashbam Text: *The verse phrase book you wrote refers to the Book of Life in which God decides who will live and who will die. In other words, Moses requests death (suicide). To support his point Rashbam cites*

- **Is04:03** *All who are written for life in Jerusalem [this refers to the writing in book of life]*
- **Nu11:15** *If You (God) treat me this way (leader of a complaining nation) please kill me [proof that Moses had suicidal tendencies]*

Contribution of Rabbi Boncheck: Rabbi Boncheck brings the Rashi and Rashbam text. Rabbi Boncheck uses this to show the plausibility of alternate explanations. In fact Rabbi Boncheck states that Rashbam's text is preferred. Rabbi Boncheck defends Rashi by stating there are verses where the Torah is called *book*.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: First, the Rashi Newsletter classifies this as the **Meaning** method. Second, one way of determining meaning is seeking verses with the word and exploring their meaning in them. Compare the following

- **Dt28-68** ...To do the words of the Torah written in this book
- **Dt28-61** ...all sicknesses...not written in this book of Torah
- **Dt29-19** ...the curses written in this book of Torah will fall on him
- **Dt17-18** ...(the King) shall write the repetition of the Torah (Deuteronomy) on a book

So, as Rabbi Boncheck suggests, there is justification for Rashi's approach. But we can go deeper. We show the approach of the Rashbam not viable. Rashbam suggests that Moses wanted to commit suicide. But a desire for suicide is pathological and only found in sick people. Moses was not psychologically sick. Moses rightly says that if he ultimately fails with the Jewish people he does not even want a partial success; he doesn't want his name written at all in the Torah if he has to ultimately fail. But he was not suicidal.

As to the verses where Moses says *if you God treat me this way then kill me*, this was not a suicide wish. In fact Moses was worried about being stoned by the nation (**Ex17-04**) and preferred a peaceful death to death by a mob. That is not suicide.

In summary: In examining a verse we must not only apply Rashi methods such as **meaning**, we must also check the consistency with the psychological profiles of the people

involved. Moses was not suicidal and hence it is incorrect to interpret a verse, as the Rashbam does, to refer to suicidal wishes. This is true *even* if textual cues support the suicidal interpretation.

Meaning-Synonyms *Daily Rashi* Fri Feb 26th 2016 Gn32-05a

NOTE: We bring this Rashi (from Genesis) to support the next Rashi which is from this week's Parshah.

Biblical Texts: Gn32-05a

[Background: Jacob sends a message to Esauv, his brother, who is travelling towards him and might have hostile intentions.]

[Jacob sends angels to Esauv] I have stayed-over with Laban and delayed till now

Current Rashi text: *Stay-over in Hebrew is GRTI. If you transpose the letters you obtain TRIG.*

TRIG in Hebrew refers to the 613 commandments. This shows that Jacob observed the Torah while living with Esauv.

Contribution of Chizkuni and Rashi Newsletter: The Rashi Newsletter uses the **Synonym** method. There are two Hebrew words for city residence in Hebrew

- **Yashavti** - this refers to residence and establishment.
- **Garti** - This refers to staying over. The Hebrew word **Gar** means a non-citizen.

Since Jacob says *Garti* I stayed over with Laban, *even though* he was an established person in the city - he worked for the local

leaders (Laban), married two women, and had several children. This implies some type of uncomfortableness (why else use the term *stayed over*). This implies that Jacob was a moral, ethical person who observed the revealed law while Laban as is well known was deceitful. Hence Jacob *stayed over* with Laban.

Further Contribution of Rashi NewsLetter. In my groundbreaking article, *Peshat and Derash*, Tradition, Volume 18(4), www.Rashiyomi.com/rashi.pdf, I show that Rashi

- Always has sound rule-based comments (in this case the **Synonym** method)
- But may *express* the Rashi using a pun (in this case the pun on GATRI - TRIG)
- It is a grave mistake to see the pun as the *cause* of the comment; it is only the expression of the comment.

Note the important implication: The Rashi is based on grammatical principles not on the pun. Rashi uses the pun to help people remember the idea. It is a mistake to think that Rashi based the comment on the pun and that the pun is homiletic fancy.

Reference *Daily Rashi* Sat 27th 2016 Ex32-05a

Biblical Texts: Ex32-05a

[Background: Moses was late in returning; the Jews wanted a golden calf as their Deity.]

And Aaron saw, he built an altar before it [the golden calf] and said "Tomorrow is a holiday for God"

Current Rashi text: He saw that there was life in it [the Golden

calf]

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: We use the reference method. **Ex20-20** speaks about the prohibition of making golden (idolatrous) gods.

Rambam (Laws of Idolatry) explains that original idolatry is not bowing to images. Rather the original idolatry was to make images of the fire visions that people saw. These fire visions were deified. As an example Ezekiel saw a fire vision of an Ox. The golden calf is an apt symbol of the fire vision of the ox. The *intent* of the idolater is to encourage further visions of the golden ox. The idea is to worship God but through the physical images that resemble Him.

Aaron did not believe that a golden calf was living. But he saw that the calf resembled the ox seen in prophetic visions; the golden color resembled the fire nature of the prophetic visions. The people believed that the fire-colored golden calf could inspire prophetic visions just as Moses had.

Grammar-Reference *Daily Rashi* Sun-Mon 28-29th 2016
Ex32-05c,6b

Biblical Texts: Ex32-05c, 6b

[Background: Moses was late in returning; the Jews wanted a golden calf as their Deity.]

And Aaron saw, he built an altar before it [the golden calf] and said "Tomorrow is a holiday for God The people got up early tomorrow and they arose to mock and tease ... Joshua told Moses [on the descent from the mountain] I hear shouting;

Moses responded: This is not a victory shout; it is not a shout of weakness; it is a mob shouting.

Current Rashi text: Aaron built the altar to delay worship - for this reason he said *A holiday to God tomorrow*, hoping that by tomorrow Moses will come. The Midrash Vayiqrah Rabbah creates a pun:

- The Hebrew word for *build*, also means *understand*
- The Hebrew word for altar, *mizbayach*, also means *to sacrifice/kill*
- The phrase for *before it [the altar]* can also mean *before him [the dead body of Chur]*

So the biblical phrase *Aaron built an altar before it [the golden calf]* can also mean *Aaron understood from the sacrifice/killing of him [Chur]* (that is, it was pointless to argue with them)

Contribution of Rabbi Boncheck: Rabbi Boncheck uses the above Rashi to illustrate a simultaneous use of

- Peshat, simple textual meaning, *he built an altar before it [the golden calf]*
- Homily, *he understood from the sacrifice [of Chur] before him [and that is why he built an altar]*

Rabbi Boncheck notes that Rashi might say the same thing in both a simple and homiletic way. Rabbi Boncheck comments on the Midrash VaYiqrah Rabbah "That is clearly homily!"

Not so!! The Rashi Newsletter has explained its views in the previous Rashis. Rashi

- Always states Peshat the simple meaning of the text using

rule-based methods

- However Rashi may use a pun form to express the idea.
- One should not think that Rashi is deriving a comment from a pun.

Let us examine: How does Rashi know that Chur was murdered. Rashi learns this from two clearly and explicitly stated verse ideas:

- The people got up to *mock and tease*. This Rashi is based on the **Grammar** method.
 - In the Active tense the Hebrew verb **Tzachek** means to laugh
 - In the Intensive tense the Hebrew verb **Tzachek** means to mock and tease. It is frequently used with sexual and homicidal crimes.
- Moses responds to Joshua *This is not the victory shout nor lament wailing; rather it is the mob shouting.*

So we have explicitly in the text: *mocking, teasing, the mob*. Such an atmosphere leads naturally to murder. Let us carefully examine

- It makes enormous sense: Someone was murdered so Aaron built an altar since he was afraid for his life
- It makes enormous non-sense: Aaron violated the prohibition of idolatry and built an altar on the assumption that perhaps Moses will come down inbetween.

Thus we see that

- The pun mentioned by Rashi - he saw that Chur was murdered and hence built an altar - is the true simple meaning of the text backed up by the phrase *mock and tease and mob*

shout

- The so call simple meaning of the text - he built an altar to delay till Moses came - is rediculous and inconsistent with the severity of the idolatrous crime.

This principle that we have enunciated

- Rashi is always rule-based but may express himself with puns
- Rashi never derives exegetical material from a pun. The pun is there to make you laugh and rejoice in God's law and also to remember the Rashi!

We have left one item: We know *someone* was killed; how do we know it was Chur. The commentators explain that it is *reasonable* that it is Chur since (Ex24) Moses left Aaron and Chur to guide the nation when he went up to heaven but we never hear about Chur again. Given that someone was murdered and that Chur is never mentioned we infer that he was the one murdered. He probably tried to stop them. After he was killed, Aaron theorized that he was next since the nation was behaving like a mob not like rational people.

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