

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in ChuKaTh
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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.

Hi

The first three Rashis in this weeks Parshah are typically not explained and defended as best they can. We present crisp explanations - hope you enjoy!

Russell Jay Hendel, President, Rashiyomi

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-Sat 7/14-16/2016

Nu19-02a, Nu09-03a,b

Biblical Text: *This is the Chok of biblical law which God commanded Moses to say over: ...*

Rashi: [The word Chok is a hyponym (special instance) of the hypernym (general category) of *law*. Co-hyponyms of Chok are law, commandment, ordinance, commemoration, and a few others peculiar to Hebrew. Rashi proceeds to explain the particular nuances of Chok] *Because Satan and the nations of the world try to prevent observance by Jews by saying: What is this commandments and what reason does it have. Therefore the biblical text uses the word Chok: It is a decree before me. You have no permission to think after it.*

Contribution of Almost all Rashi commentators: Almost all Rashi commenators focus on the underlined words in Rashi. Based on these underlined words, they explain the word *Chok* as meaning *decree*, an apodictic law made without necessarily having any reason. To support their view they cite the underlined Rashi words. *It is a decree before me. You have no permission to think after it.* This has created a culture where Chok does not have to have a reason.

Contribution of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Bible

Commentator: Rav Hirsch rejects the classical explanation since it follows no known rule of meaning. Rabbi Hirsch uses the **Database** method. He reviews all *usages* of *Chok* in the Bible. Based on verses like **Proverbs 30:8** Rabbi Hirsch explains that *Chok* means a basic intrinsic need vs. an external need. **Proverb 30:8** should therefore be translated: *Do not give me poverty or riches; cut for me my chok bread*, that is, *my basic intrinsic dietary needs*.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: A punchy way to understand

meaning is to contrast the meaning with a synonym or more precisely with a hyponym pair. **Nu09-03** discussing the Pascal offering lists two kinds of laws of the Pascal offering

- *Ordinances* - external attributes of the Pascal offering such as the preparatory burning of leaven (clearly the leaven is not part of the body of the pascal lamb)
- *Statutes (Chok)* - intrinsic attributes of the Pascal offering, attributes in the body of the lamb - *unblemished, male, one year, and lamb*.

This contrast of hyponyms illustrates the point made by Rabbi Hirsch that *Chok* refers to something basic and intrinsic to the person.

A Punchy Example: The contrastive example pair I use to illustrate the difference between *Chok* and *ordinance* is a medical one

- The prohibition of exercising in very hot weather is a prohibition on avoiding *external* items that can cause *immediate harm*. Everyone understands these prohibitions.
- Contrastively, the prohibition of eating excessive salt refers to intrinsic body requirements. After all you can have salty foods and nothing happens to you. The emphasis here is that excessive salt intake could *eventually*, not *immediately*, lead to disease. It is not immediately seeable.

The contribution I am making is the *immediate: eventual* distinction to explain *ordinance:chok* which is close to but not the same as the *intrinsic:extrinsic* distinction of Rashi.

As this example shows

- A *chok* prohibition, like the prohibition of eating salt, *does* have

reasons. However,

- It is easy to make fun of the prohibition and act like nothing is happening since the reasons, although they do exist, are *distant* and not *immediate*.

In a similar manner, the red heiffer law, remedying the contact with a dead corpse is a *Chok*. You do not see *immediate* harm if you don't fulfill it. But you do *eventually* see harm. This explains the Rashi language about non Jewish nations challenging Jewish observance.

Grammar - Indirect Object *Daily Rashi* Sun 7/17/2016 Nu19-02b

Background: God is commanding Moses on the requirements of the Red Heiffer.

Biblical Text: Let them take *to you* a red heiffer

Rashi: *To you* means that the Red Heiffer will be called after you: *The Red Heiffer of Moses*.

Contribution of Rashi Commentators: Traditional Rashi commentators focus on the extraneous or superfluity of the phrase *to you*. They argue that the phrase *to you* is extra because the verse is perfectly understandable without it. In Biblical exegesis this is known as the principle of omnisignificance. This is not an exegetical principle of the Rashi Newsletter because it is too vague.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The phrase *to you* is known in **Grammar** as an indirect object. The verb is *take*, the object is *red heiffer* and the indirect object is *to you*: *Take a red heiffer to you*. Rashi introduced the **Grammar** principle that an indirect object always connotes a personal aspect. Because this is a new Rashi principle, Rashi

comments on it about a dozen times in the Bible. Some other examples are

a) **Ex25-02**, *take to me (God) donations*; Rashi explains *The donations must be explicitly dedicated to God*, in other words there is a personal aspect here since the emphasis is not just on physical donations but explicit specification *to God*.

b) **Nu10-01**, *make for you two trumpets*; Rashi explains *They will be your personal trumpets; no one else can use them*.

c) **Nu13-02**, *Send for yourself spies to spy out Canaan*; Rashi explains that the sending of spies was not a command but an option for Moses' personal use if he so wanted to.

As can be seen, Rashi always interprets *for you*, indirect objects, as indicating a personal aspect.

Grammar - Adjective Order *Daily Rashi Mon*

7/18/2016 Nu19-02c

Background: God is commanding Moses on the requirements of the Red Heiffer.

Biblical Text: Let them take a perfectly red heiffer

Rashi: Superficially Rashi is distinguishing between two possible readings of the three underlined words

- a red perfect heiffer
- a perfectly red heiffer

In other words, is *perfect*

- An adjective modifying heiffer or
- An adverb modifying red (Perfectly red).

Rashi explains that the correct reading is perfectly red heiffer.

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter: But Rashi does not explain *how* he arrives at this conclusion. The Rashi Newsletter points to a rule of grammar which exists in all languages but is not always remembered, the adjective order rule. Examples are plenty. Consider in English the contrast of the following phrases

- *three red dolls vs red three dolls*
- *small steel needle vs. steel small needle*
- *Colonial wooden chair vs. Wooden colonial chair*

The first two bullets are probably obvious. The first of each pair *sounds right* while the 2nd does not. Why? Because *number adjectives* precede *color adjectives* and *size adjectives* precede *material adjectives*. In the third bullet, the first item is correct thought the 2nd item sounds ok. The rule is that *origin adjectives* precede *material adjectives*.

We of course are dealing with Biblical Hebrew but have explained the principle using English. By the position of the biblical adjectives for *red* and *perfect* Rashi infers that *perfect (unblemished)* is an adverb modifying red rather than an adjective modifying heiffer.

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