

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in VaAyRaH
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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

This issue continues our exploration of commandments in each parshah. We review several places in Jewish law that respect is given to inanimate objects the purpose being to encourage us to respect our fellow Jews.

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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**Database *Rashi Newsletter* Ex07-19a, Ex08-12a,
Ex20-23b Thur-Sat Jan 11-13, 2018**

Background: There are several verses where Rashi interprets a commandment as asking for *respect* for inanimate objects. The idea behind such commandments is to practice respect on the inanimate in order to encourage respect on humans.

But how does Rashi come to such a conclusion? Rashi has stated many times he is only interested in the straightforward meaning of the text. What we do today is show that this interpretation of Rashi originally emanates from an application of the Rashi **Database** method. Once the idea *respect for the inanimate* is established it can be transferred. We also mention places in Jewish law where this occurs.

The table below contains the 10 plagues and *who* administered them. Of course, Moses was the main player. But in three of them Moses told Aaron to administer the plague. The database inquiry is a method of extracting nuances from the text based on the innuendo contrasts of various verses. The table below shows how.

Biblical Text

Plague Number	Plague Name	Verse	Administrator of Plague	Why the difference
1	Blood	Ex07-19a	Aaron	Moses owed the Nile a favor for saving his life when a baby
2	Frogs	Ex08-01	Aaron	Moses owed the Nile a favor for saving his life when a baby
3	Lice	Ex08-12a	Aaron	Moses owed dust a favor for saving his life when he buried the person he murdered in the dust
4	Animals	Ex08-16	Moses	
5	Pestilence	Ex09-01	Moses	
6	Boils	Ex09-10	Moses	
7	Hail	Ex09-22	Moses	
8	Locust	Ex10-01	Moses	
9	Darkness	Ex10-21	Moses	
10	1 st Born	Ex11-21	Moses	

Rashi: Just to clarify, the **Database method** compares differences between very similar verses. In the table above we compare the differences between the 10 plagues and notice that although Moses administered most of them, Aaron administered the first three.

Databases justify inference of nuance. What nuances could explain the Aaron-Moses discrepancy? Rashi suggests that Moses owed certain inanimate objects a favor and therefore could not curse them with a plague.

- When Moses was a baby, he was placed in a little ark on the Nile. The Egyptian princess found him and spared him. Thus, the Nile helped save Moses' life. It would be *unethical* for Moses to now curse the Nile with blood so Aaron was asked to do this.

- A similar argument applies to the Frogs. Although Rashi does not comment on the Frog plague it too was from the Nile. The Frogs came up from the Nile and spread over Egypt. Again, Moses owed the Nile a favor and could not curse that its natural residents, the Frogs, should leave it.
- A similar comment applies to the 3rd plague where the earth dust was smitten and lice came out. But when Moses murdered an Egyptian officer unjustly smiting a fellow Jew, Moses hid the dead body in the dust. The dust concealed Moses' sin. So, Moses owed the dust a favor and could not smite it.

In all three cases, we portray the inanimate object (Nile, dust) as having feeling and show respect and sensitivity for these feelings. In literature, this is known as an anthropomorphism.

To recap: The database method uncovered a difference between similar verses. To explain this difference requires nuance analysis. These nuances emanate from sound literary methods (but are still nuances).

Comment: Once Rashi justifies the anthropomorphism principle it becomes a general principle in Judaism. It applies to other biblical and rabbinic items. Here are two examples:

- **Ex20-23b** prohibits walking up the altar in steps;

rather, the altar must have a ramp not steps. Without the **database** method and nuances, we would not have an explanation of this. But because of the anthropomorphism principle, derived elsewhere from the **Database method**, Rashi points out that by taking the smaller steps used on a ramp, vs. the bigger strides taken on steps, the priests do not expose their nakedness to the steps; that is, the steps are not embarrassed to see the priest's nakedness!

- It is well known that on Friday night when reciting the blessing on wine, we first cover the challah bread. Why? Because nutritionally, bread is more important than wine. It would therefore embarrass the bread to see honor and deference given to mere wine in its presence. So, we cover the bread to avoid embarrassing it.

In both these examples we use the anthropomorphism principle. The idea seems to be that by showing respect to the inanimate we practice sensitivity and are better able to show respect to our fellow humans.

It is interesting, that the sister commandments of not causing anguish to animals is a basis for animal therapy whereby a patient with emotional problems is able in a non-confrontational setting to show care for animals thereby preparing the patient to resume normal relationships with humans.

**Database-Grammar *Rashi Newsletter* Ex06-03b
Ex06-04b Mon-Tue Jan 14-15, 2018**

Background: It is a mistake to think that Judaism has no laws or guidance on dreams. Dreams play an integral part of one's inner emotional life and one's inner spiritual life. According to the Ralbag (who differs from Rambam) there is a continuum from *dreams* to *prophecy*. For example, although Joseph was not identified in the bible as a prophet, and although his dreams-upright objects-could easily be interpreted as ordinary physical dreams of a young teenager, nevertheless Joseph's dreams were a major factor in changing the governance of Egypt and how the Jewish nation developed.

An important principle of dreams is that if they are treated spiritually, they should not be interpreted to deal with the immediate future but rather with the distant future. As such they become motivational, a force driving the person on his/her path in life. Thus, Joseph *could* have interpreted his upright-stick dreams to refer to his personal life. However, he did not do so; he interpreted it as something distant. Joseph, who had a background in sheparding was encouraged to study how to make agricultural products sturdy, like the upright sheaves. He gained this experience while being master steward in Potiphar's house. He later used it to save the Egyptian

economy by identifying best practices to preserve food.

Let us see the verses. The immediate background is that God is speaking to Moses

- Moses is complaining that God promised to save the Jewish people. Moses interpreted this as an *immediate* salvation. But what followed immediately was worse treatment to the Jewish people. Moses did not fully understand this principle of dreams/prophecy and complained to God
- Contrastively, God made many promises to the Patriarchs which he did not fulfill even in their lifetime.

Here are the verses.

Biblical Text: *And I (God) prophetically appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a God of might and caring but my name of it will be was not known to them, even when I made a covenant with them to give them Israel, the land where they were non-citizens*

Rashi Text: Rashi makes two points.

First, Rashi uses the **Grammar** rule. He points out that the underlined phrase not known to them is the passive form of the verb to know. Of course, the Patriarchs did know of God's Tetragrammaton, the name of God which means it will be. But they never experienced it (and hence

the passive).

Second, Rashi supports this lack of knowledge with a **Database** inquiry. As the bulleted list below shows, God promised each of the Patriarchs Israel but the Patriarchs never obtained Israel in their lifetime. Thus, this covenant by God, under oath, to give Israel, was not a dream/prophecy that was fulfilled immediately but rather a motivational force on the nation that was eventually fulfilled. Here is the output of the Database inquiry.

- **Gn17-01:08** - God promises to Abraham Israel (Covenant of cuts)
- **Gn26-03** - God commands Isaac to stay as a non-citizen in Israel since it will be given to him (eventually)
- **Gn35-11:12** - God promises to Jacob who is fleeing from Laban, that he will be fruitful and that (eventually) he will get Israel.

The takeaway from this is that Judaism does have a view on dreams.

- All dreams can become minor prophecies
- Provided the person does not demand immediate fulfillment of the dream but rather
- Views the dream as a motivational force guiding their life which will eventually be fulfilled.

There are in fact many secular books treating dreams this way and it is embarrassing that we, the nation who gave prophecy to the world, should not be proud of our own heritage as seeing dreams as futuristic.

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
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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
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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)
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IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited
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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.
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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
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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

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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

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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.

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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