The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on Parshat VaYaQayl-Pequday-VaYiQRaH
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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. This year, 2012-2013, we are concentrating on the **grammar** rule. We acknowledge benefitting from Dr. Isseroff's book, *An Introduction to Rashi's Grammatical Explanations in the Book of Genesis*, 1985, Published by the Torah Education Department of World Zionist Organization, MP Press Inc, ISBN 965-222-049-3. For a full lightning statement of all Rashi rules see the Appendix.

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Plural vs. Singular *Daily Rashi Sunday Mar 10, 2013*

All languages have the capacity to indicate plurality - many vs one:
- In English, the plural is indicated by a terminal *s:* For example, *apples,* would indicate many apples.
- In Hebrew, the plural can be indicated by a terminal *mem,* or in the case of the Hebrew construct, by a terminal *yud.*

Example: **Lv01-02**

Note the following delightful but skillful use of singular and plural (as indicated by the underlinings)

Biblical text: *When a <u>person</u> amongst you offers an offering to God, then <u>they</u> shall offer their <u>offerings</u> from animals, from cattle or penned animals.*

Rashi: The shifting singular and plural teaches that these voluntary up offerings (*Olah*) can be offering either by

- the individual (*when a <u>person</u>*), or
- a partnership or the community (*<u>they</u>....<u>offerings</u>*)

Repetition *Daily Rashi Monday Mar 11, 2013*

Repetition is a fundamental exegetical method with diverse meanings. Repetition can legitimately be interrpeted both restrictively and broadly. Repetition is a literary technique used in all languages. Repetition can be used to indicate

- emphasis
- necessity
- all-inclusiveness of other cases

and many more. As we go through the yearly cycle we shall have opportunity to examine many diverse usages of repetition. A good reference on uses of repetition in biblical exegesis is found below.

Example 1: **Ex38-21**
Biblical text: *These are the audits of <u>the Temple</u>, <u>the Temple of the 10 Commandments</u>, which was audited by Moses, the craftmanship of the Levites under the supervision of Ithamar, son of Aaron the (High) Priest.*

Rashi interprets the repetition, indicated by the underlines, expansively:
These are the audits of

- *<u>the Temple</u>,* [Rashi: Any Temple, whether the Wilderness temple or future Temples to be built, such as the Solomonic Temple]
- *<u>the Temple of the 10 Commandments</u>,* - [Rashi: The Wilderness temple which had the 10 commandments]

which was audited by Moses, the craftmanship of the Levites under the supervision of Ithamar, son of Aaron the (High) Priest.

A punchier way to understand Rashi's comment on the phrase *the Temple, the Temple of the 10 commandments* is <u>*any*</u> *Temple.* In other words, the repetition connotes an expansive translation including any Temple.

References

Russell Jay Hendel, **Biblical Formatting**, *Jewish Bible Quarterly,* 35#1,17 - 27:

Connective words - *Interchangability of connective words*
Daily Rashi Tuesday Mar 12, 2013

Every language has connective words which can connect two sentences or connect nouns with the adjectival phrases modifying them. Some common examples of connective words in English are *because, and, or, if-then, from, when, ...*

A beautiful discovery by Rashi, following the researchers of the Midrash, is that in biblical Hebrew, each connective word has multiple meanings, sometimes as many as half a dozen meanings. The most famous example points out that the biblical Hebrew word *ki,* can have any of the following six meanings! *rather, perhaps, because, when, if-then, that.* As several Rashi researchers have pointed out, this principle of multiple meanings applies not only to *ki,* but generally applies to all connective words and prefixes.

So biblical Hebrew is unlike English:
- English is user friendly; the speaker explicitly by choice of words tells the listener exactlly what the speaker intends to say
- Contrastively, in Hebrew, the speaker and listener share the discovery of meaning: The speaker says something, but the listener has a choice of meanings.

Perhaps the reason for biblical Hebrew in doing this is that by the listener participating with the speaker in identifying meaning the listening experience is intensified, facilitating retention of communication.

A consequence of this principle is that connective words do not necessarily have one meaning. In fact, the same prepositional connective can have opposite meanings - like to and from.

Example from this week's Parshah

Example 2: **Ex35-22**
This verse discusses how the Jewish people donated generously for the building of the Temple. The verse describes how both men and women made contributions.

Biblical text: *The men came <u>with</u> the women; every generous hearted person*

brought bracelets and earrings and rings and buckles, all kinds of golden objects, and every man who waved a waving of gold to the Lord.

Rashi: The Hebrew word, *al,* which normally means *on,* here, in this verse, means *with.* This word is underlined in the translation. (In fact the Hebrew word *al,* has about 7 meanings).

Example 1:
Ex28-22a, discssing how the Choshen priestly garment was attached to the Eyfod priestly garment, states *And you shall make <u>for</u> the breastplate, chains, twisted like cords, of pure gold, at the end.*

Rashi: The Hebrew word used, *al,* normally means *on.* However, it means *for (for the purpose).*

As we go through the yearly cycle we will have occasion to study uses of *al.*

REFERENCES

The following are some references on the interchageability of specific connectives. There are many more

Esra Shereshevsky, *The Use of Prepositions and Conjunctions in Rashi's Commentary,* **The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series**, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Jan., 1967), pp. 200-211

Nahum M. Sarna, *The Interchange of the Prepositions Beth and Min in Biblical Hebrew*, **Journal of Biblical Literature**, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Dec., 1959), pp. 310-316

Denominatives *Daily Rashi: Wednesday Mar 13, 2013*

All languages have the capacity to change a noun, naming an object, into a verb naming an activity. Grammarians call this a *denominative.* Here are some common examples from English as well as two Rashis.

Example From this week's Parshah

Example 11: **Ex39-03**
Biblical text: *And they skyed the gold sheets and cut threads in order to weave with the azure, with royal purple, with the worm-dyed wool, and with the linen.*

<u>Rashi:</u> *To sky* is a denominative meaning *to hammer* and *make flat* so that it has the appearance of a rolled out sky.

<u>Example 10</u>: *To leaf* means to cover with leafs. Here the verb *to leaf* (*Sacotha*) comes from the noun *leafs, bush, coverings* (*Sechach*). Then using the *synendoche* figure of speech which says *honey* can refer to *anything sweet,* and *bread* can refer to *any food*, we infer that *sacotha (to leaf)* refers to any type of loose covering. Rashi applies this to **Ex40-03** *and <u>leaf</u> the ark cover over the ark.*

The experienced Hebrew speaker will note that *sacotha* does not exactly mean covering with leafs. It actually refers to covering with leafy branches the type of covering used in the Succah holiday.

<u>Example 1:</u>
To hammer means to use the *hammer* in its typical way. Here the verb *to hammer* comes from the noun, *hammer.*

<u>Example 2:</u>
To flower means to produce *flowers.* Here the verb *to flower* comes from the noun, *flower.*

<u>Example 3:</u>
To dust means to remove *dust.* Here the verb *to dust* comes from the noun *dust.* Hence from the word *Deshen*, referrring to animal ash, Rashi infers that the verbal *LeDashno* is a denominative meaning *to ash,* that is to *remove the ash.* The verbal form occurs in **Ex27-03b** in a discussion of utensils of the Temple altar.

Rashi notes the contrast that the same verb can give rise to contrastive denominatives: For example Ps80-10 speaks about flowers *taking root* while Job31:12 speaks about *uprooting* flowers. The driving force here is the Piel (intensive mode) which frequently has a connotation of negation.

<u>Example 4:</u>
Ex28-14b discussing the making of the Chosen states *And make two <u>bordered</u> chains of pure gold, twisted like cords, and fasten the corded chains to the fixtures.* Rashi explains that *bordered* is a passive denominative indicating chains placed on the *borders* or ends of chosen (to attach them to the main garment).

<u>Example 5:</u>

To right means to *go to the right.* Here the verb *to right* comes from the noun *right.* A similar analysis applies to the meaning of *to left.* This is a Rashi comment on **Gn13-09** which *should* be translated as follows: *[Abraham to Lot, when Abraham asked him to part from him] If [you go] to the left, <u>I will right</u>; if [you go] to the right, <u>I will left</u>.*

Notice how all English translations avoid this punchy denominative which adds flavor to the verse.

<u>Example 6 Gn01-22b</u> (*from parshat Breishith*)
To be fruitful means to have many children like a tree producing many *fruit.*Here the verb *to be fruitful* comes from the noun *fruit* and indicates an important attribute of *fruit,* the large number of fruit produced by each tree (<u>Rashi</u>: Gn01-22b)

<u>Example 7 Gn05-28a</u>:
From the noun, *children*, we derive the verb, *to build a household* (<u>Rashi</u>: Gn05-28a)*.* Rashi's perspective is interesting here. We might erroneously translate the Hebrew word *Bayit* as meaning house. Rashi actually translates it meaning *household.* Rashi's translation is extremely precise: Compare the use of *Bayit* in Gn 45-02: "And word was heard in <u>Pharoh's household</u> that Joseph's brother's had come." As <u>Rashi</u> observes, "*The house did not hear; rather the household heard.*"

<u>Example 8,9: Ex01-07</u> (*from Parshat Shemoth)* <u>Gn48-16c</u>
From the nouns *insects* and *fish* we derive the verbs *to insectify (*in English, *to swarm),* and to *fishify;* both these verbs refer to producing many children since both *insects* and *fish* tend to reproduce alot. Contrastively, *fruits* on trees, appear in clusters of 3 or 4 at a time. Hence the denominatives

- *to be fruitful* - indicates the verb for normal reproduction
- *to swarm* or *to fishify* - indicates the verb for excessive reproduction (large families).

This denominative illustrates a major literary method of figures of speech, common in all languages. The method is called *synechdoche. Synechdoche* refers to naming something by a good example of it. Some common examples of *synechdoche* are

- naming *sweets, honey (honey* is a good example of sweets)
- naming the *24 hour day, day (day,* the 12-hour period, is a good example of the 24 hour period)
- referring to *food,* using the term *bread (bread* is a good example of food).
- similarly, to *insectify (swarm)* or *to fishify* names excessive reproduction by species (insects, fish) that are good examples of excessive reproduction.

Synechdoche, like other figures of speech, is a method common to all languages and is used extensively by Rashi.

Comment: Rashi on Ex01-06 literally says on the biblical text *they insectified (swarmed)* as follows: *They had 6 children at a time*. This has led some Rashi commentators to erroneously attribute this Rashi to the 6 words in the text: *The Jews were* (i) *fruitful*, and (ii) *insectified* (*swarmed*), (iii) *they multiplied and they became* (iv) *very* (v) *very* (vi) *strong* (in numbers). These Rashi commentators argue that Rashi's comment was not the simple meaning of the text but rather a pun: Rashi derives *They gave birth to <u>six</u> children at a time* from the <u>six</u> adverbs and verbs in the verse.

This is rediculous. For example, Moses' father, Amram, only had 3 children (Moses, Aaron and Miryam) not 6. All Rashi comments are rooted in the simple meaning of the text. The simple meaning of the text is that Rashi is commenting on the verb *insectify* and explaining that it means excessive reproduction. We can reformulate this abstractly by using the modern concept of the denominative.

However Rashi chose to phrase the <u>form</u> of his comment as a pun. Instead of saying *The word insectify means excessive reproduction* Rashi instead says *They had six children at a time.* The truth is however this is a pun in <u>form</u> not in <u>content</u>. Not all Jews had six children (as evidenced by Amram). However, overall the Jews had an excessive birth rate.

Verb Connectives *Daily Rashi Thursday Mar 14 2013*

Most people know that the meaning of Hebrew verbs are determined by their 3-letter roots. For example the basic Hebrew root, **Shin-Mem-Resh**, means *to watch*. So for example, **ShaMaRti** means *I watched*, while, **yiShMoR** means *he will watch*.

People are aware that the different modes of the verb (*binyanim*) can change meaning. For example,
- the *Qal* mode of the root **Beth-Vav-Aleph** means *to come*
- the *Hifil* mode (causative mode) means *to bring* (to cause something else to come).

Here the two concepts - *come, bring* -
- have the same verbal Hebrew roots but

- have different English roots.

In a similar manner
- just as verbal modes can change a root meaning
- so too the same root with differing prepositional or adverbial connectives can change meaning.

Many people however are not aware that the prepositional connective that follows a verb may determine its meaning. As we go through the weekly Parshah cycle we will examine examples of this phenomenon. This phenomenon happens in English also. See the discussion at the end.

Example from today's Parshah

Example: **Lv01-01**
Biblical text: The biblical root **Kuph-Resh-Aleph** has several meetings depending on the prepositional connective used:
- *QaRaH* (without any prepositional connective) - means *to call*
- *QaRaH eth* - can mean to *name* someone
- *QaRaH el* - means *to page* or to *notify*

Hence the Rashi translation of **Lv01-01**: *God paged Moses* (alerted Moses that he was going to received a prophecy)*: God cited* [prophetically] *to Moses from the Wilderness Temple to say over* [to the Jewish people]

Rashi explains the contrast that
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In other words it is a sign of consideration.

Acknowledgement: I am deeply indebted to the great modern commentator, Malbim, for this translation of page. As we go through the Rashis on Leviticus we will have numerous opportunities to benefit from the Malbim's keen insights.

Example 5: **Ex34-01**
God said to Moses: Stone-carve for yourself two (new) stone tablets like the first tablets [that were broken] and I will write on the 2ⁿᵈ tablets the matters that were on the first tablets that you broke.

Rashi citing the midrash shows that the underlined words *for yourself* emphasizes a personal aspect of the stone-carving. Here is the actual Rashi which is quite detailed.

Hew for yourself: You broke the first ones. You hew others for yourself. This can be compared to a king who went abroad and left his betrothed with the maidservants. Because of the immoral behavior of the maidservants, she acquired a bad reputation. Her bridesman [the person appointed to defend the bride should any problems arise] arose and tore up her marriage contract. He said, "If the king decides to kill her, I will say to him, 'She is not yet your wife.'" The king investigated and discovered that only the maidservants were guilty of immoral behavior. He [therefore] became appeased to her. So her bridesman said to him, "Write her another marriage contract because the first one was torn up." The king replied to him, "You tore it up. You buy yourself another [sheet of] paper, and I will write to her with my [personal] hand [writing]." Likewise, the king represents the Holy One, blessed is He. The maidservants represent the mixed multitude. The bridesman is Moses, and the betrothed of the Holy One, blessed is He, is Israel. That is why it says: "Hew for yourself." -[from Tanchuma 30]

Example 4: **Ex19-27**
And his father-in-law [Jethro] *took leave of Moses, and went, for personal reasons, to his home.*

Here is the brilliant contribution of Rashi
- The Hebrew *Vayaylech* means to go (went in the past tense)
- When the adverbial phrase *lo,* for himself, is attached to *any* verb, Rashi interprets it to mean *for personal reasons.*

In this particular case since we have a historical record of
- *a society of Kaynites* (**Judges 4:17,21**)
- *that helped the Jews*
Rashi reasonably assumes that Jethro founded this society which later came

- *to the aid of the Jews*.

Note how the Rashi proceeds in two stages:
- Rashi always interprets the preposition *lo* meaning *for himself,* to mean that the activity of the verb was *done for personal reasons*
- Given this interpretation Rashi then finds the most reasonable interpretation of *done for personal reasons.*

As we go through the yearly cycle we will find about a dozen such Rashis! However the interested reader can begin looking them up now.

Homework
Read the Rashis at **Nu13-02, Ex25-02**, and **Nu10-01**. Test the hypothesis that all these Rashi are based on the interpretation of the connective pronoun, *lo,* for himself, as meaning *for personal reasons.* Such a homework exercise sharpens the eye of the student of Rashi.

There are English parallels to the above Hebrew phenomenon. In English we distinguish between prepositional and phrasal verbs. Like in Hebrew these verbs can change meaning because of the preposition or adverb following them. Some simple examples are
- *put off the party* (*postpone the party*),
- *bring up an issue* (*mention an issue*),
- *turn down a gift* (*refuse the gift*).

Here the verb-adverb pairs, *put-off*, *bring-up*, and *turn-down* have meanings totally different than the singleton verbs *put*, *bring* and *turn*.

This idea was first proposed by
[1] T. F.Mitchell, "Syntagmatic relations in linguistic analysis", *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1958), pp. 101-18, esp. 103-6.

For a more detailed description see
[2] A.P. Cowie and R. Mackin, *Oxford dictionary of current idiomatic English. Vol. 1: Verbs with prepositions and particles* (London, 1975)

For applications to interpreting difficult biblical verses (by reinterpreting the verb-preposition or verb-adverb pair) see
[3] T. Muraoka, "On Verb Complementation in Biblical HebrewAuthor(s)", *Vetus*

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHI RULES

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<u>NOTE ON COPYRIGHTS</u>:

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I-REFERENCE: Dt26-05d *We went down to Egypt with <u>a few people</u>* explained by Gn46-27: *with <u>70</u> 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 (Metonomy) (**Lv02-11a) *Don't offer ...any <u>honey</u> as sacrifices* RASHI: *honey* includes any <u>*sweet fruit juice*</u>

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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: Prefered to COOK it in water; But COOK it at all costs(Even if you dont 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 - Pharoh 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) (NuXX-XX) 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