

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis in VaYeChi

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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

It is a new issue (Vol 28) and a New Year. This year I am focusing on non-Rashi comments. We have explained Rashi now for 18 years. We frequently say that Rashi intended that the teacher use the parallelism and besides explaining the Rashi comments also explain all nuances of the parallelism, the non-Rashi comments.

So, this year I am focusing on complete explanations of all parallelisms including both the Rashi and non-Rashi comments.

We continue the halachic theme in this week's parshah. There are laws about being kind, about lying for peace, and showing respect for government leaders. The famous custom of blessing children on Friday night comes in this week's Parshah.

Dr. 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 Idiom *Daily Rashi* Gn47-29d Thursday 12/28/2017

Background: Jacob is on his death bed. He requests that Joseph do him a special kindness and bury him in Israel

Biblical: Jacob was getting close to death: He callshis son Joseph and saysto him: If I find favor in your eyes please swear to me: Do me a *special kindness (chesed veemeth)*: Don't bury me in Egypt (Rather,take me to Israel to be buried)

Rashi Text: The italicized words *chesed veemeth* is an idiomatic phrase referring to a favor for which there is no expected return.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: Notice that Rashi does appear to *derive* the meaning of the phrase from the meanings of its individual words. *chesed veemeth* is a true (emeth) kindness (chesed), a kindness for which you expect no reciprocity.

However, an important principle when studying Rashi's use of idioms is that the real derivation comes from *usage*. Rashi's justification is an afterthought. In fact, reviewing several verses where *chesed veemeth* occurs we see that it refers to kindness with no expected reciprocity:

- **Gn24-49** - Eliezer requests that Rivkah's family do a *special kindness* and let Rivkah go with him to become Isaac's wife. After that, there is no expectation that she will come back or that anything else will be received.

- **2Sam02-06** - Kind David praises the people of Yavaysh Gilad for burying Saul and blesses them that God should give a *special kindness* to them. Clearly, God will receive nothing in return
- **Jo02-14** - The spies promise to do a special kindness to Rahav who hid them. Clearly, they are conquering the land and do not expect anything further in return (Interestingly, here, the *special kindness* is done in *response* to a kindness but is not *expected* to result in anything further)

Jewish Law (Rambam) and Rashi: The Rambam gives his famous *eight stages of charity* found at the end of his laws of *Gifts to the Poor*. The highest stage is not giving money but for example giving a job.

This can be appreciated by comparing the Jewish and Christian views of charity:

- Christians see the essence of charity in self-negation; the highest form of charity is the one with the most negation of selfishness.
- Contrastively, Jewish law sees the essence of charity as a means to cling to God. The highest form of charity occurs when, like God in the act of creation, we create new wealth (so God created the world and man creates a job; the job increases wealth and is an economic creatio ex nihilo). By creating opportunities for self-sufficiency- a gift for which there is no expected return- we resemble God and cling to him.

**Contradiction Daily Rashi Gn48-02b Ex08-11a Fri-Sat
12/29,30/2017**

Background: Moses is giving his final warning to Pharaoh: Either let my people go or there will be the plague of the first born and *your servants will beg me to leave.*

Biblical Text: About midnight, I (God) will go through all of Egypt. And all firstborn will die...*and your servants will come down to me, bow to me, saying: You should leave, with all your nation.*

Rashi Text: Rashi sees a contradiction between

- **Ex08-11a** *your servants will come down to me and ask me to leave*
- **Ex08-31** (After the firstborn died) *Pharaoh call for Moses and Aaron in the middle of the night and said: Get up, leave...*

Which is it? Did the servants go to Moses or did Pharaoh himself go to Moses?

Rashi resolves the contradiction using rules of etiquette. When speaking to royalty one is non-confrontational. Instead of Moses speaking confrontationally to Pharaoh, *you will come down and bow to me and ask me to leave*, Moses spoke about *his servants coming down.*

Rashi additionally (to using the **Contradiction** method) uses the **Database** method here and gathers several examples where people showed respect to royalty even though they didn't have to

- As just shown, Moses showed respect to Pharaoh an evil king
- Jacob showed respect to Joseph (He sat up on his death bed)

even though Jacob was father. He showed respect to Joseph who had achieved royalty.

- Elijah dressed up for the wicked and abominable Achav (**1K18-46**).

Such a multiplicity of verses- the **Database** method - gives credibility and credence to the idea that royalty deserves respect independent of their good deeds.

Jewish Law and Rashi: Did you know that certain rabbinical prohibitions may be waived in order to see a royal procession? Jewish law emphasizes respect for royalty since it is the basis of civil law which gives society order.

Grammar-Pronoun *Daily Rashi* Gn48-20a Sun 12/31/2017

Background: Jacob is giving a blessing to Joseph and his children.

Biblical Text: *Through you, Jews will bless as follows: May God place you like Menashe and Ephraim.*

Rashi Text: Jacob's blessing was that Joseph's children should be considered models and paradigms of good children to the extent that all people would bless their children that they should be like Joseph's children.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The verb *bless* when used without a connective (or just the connective *eth*) in Hebrew means to bless someone. However, when the verb *bless* is connected with the pronoun *through you* it refers to considering that person a model and paradigm.

This is also consistent with the wording of the verse

- The Jews will bless through you
- As follows: May God place you like Menashe and Ephraim

Jewish Law and Rashi: It is a custom throughout all Jewish households to bless children on Friday night, "May you be like Menashe and Ephraim".

Contradiction *Daily Rashi* Gn50-16b Monday 1/1/18

Background: Jacob has just died. The brothers come to Joseph and cite a last will from their father that Joseph forgive them.

Biblical: *The brothers saw that their father had died and said: Perhaps Joseph will hate us and return on us all the evil which we did to him. So they commanded (messengers) to Joseph as follows: Your father commanded prior to death as follows: Thus should you tell Joseph: Please, please forgive to the grave sin of the servants of the God of your father ...*

Rashi Text: Jacob never gave any such command for indeed he trusted Joseph. But the brothers lied for the sake of peace.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: How did Rashi know that the cited command of Jacob was made up? Presumably one way of knowing is because if this was important to Jacob he should have communicated his thoughts to Joseph personally.

However I believe Rashi is using the **Contradiction** method:

- **Gn49-05:06** - Jacob curses Shimon and Levi for their desire

to uproot Joseph the ox

- **Gn50-16-** Jacob asks Joseph to forgive them.

This is a contradiction. After all, if anything Joseph is obligated to follow his father's wishes that Shimon and Levi be cursed and dispersed amongst the Jewish people. How then can Joseph forgive them.

Rashi resolves this contradiction by saying that the brothers lied for the sake of the peace. Please see the next section to understand the significance of lying for the sake of peace in Judaism.

Jewish Law and Rashi: Jewish law (unlike secular philosophy

- *obligates* one to lie for the sake of peace and
- *allows* one to lie for the sake of modesty.

I have heard from my teacher, the Rave, Rabbi Dr Joseph Baer Soloveitchick, that this is one of the key differences between Judaism and secular philosophy.

- The philosopher kings like Kant believed that truth was the highest virtue and that one (at least ideally) should never lie.
- Contrastively, Judaism taught that peace is the highest moral norm and takes precedence over truth.

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 (Homonyms)** 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