

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in PiNChaS
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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 year I am focusing on the presence of Jewish Law in verses and Rashi.

Today I am taking some very weird Rashi comments that really looked far-fetched and show how they are grammatical and sound.

I will attempt to send out the Parshah over a week in advance.

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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Grammar-puns *Daily Rashi* Nu26-05a *Thur* 7/5/2018

Background: Nu26 presents the Jewish national tribal lineages. There are about 5 dozen listed. In all but one there is a name change. Rashi explains why using a pun. We shall show this pun to be grammatically sound. First let us see the evidence

Biblical Text: Nu26

Actual Name:--Chamul--,--Chanoch--,--Yamin--,--Chufam--,--Arod--,Yimnah
Tribal Name:**HA**chamul**Y**,**HA**Chanoch**Y**,**HA**Yamin**Y**,**HA**Chufam**Y**,**HA**arod**Y**,Yimnah

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter and Rashi Text: The Biblical Text is written above. Let us be clear about the meaning of this list.

A typical Biblical verse in Nu26 reads as follows:

*For the tribe of Reuven: Corresponding to Chanoch, **HA**Chanoch**Y** clan; Corresponding to Palu, **HA**Palu**Y** clan,...*

In other words, the biblical chapter consists of a list of grandchildren of Jacob such as Chanoch, Palu etc. and the corresponding tribal clans **HA**Chanoch**Y**, **HA**Palu**Y**.

As can be seen, the name of each tribal clan is obtained by adding a prefix **HA** and suffix **Y** to the grandchild's name. So, corresponding to the grandchild Chanoch, we have the **HA**Chanoch**Y** clan.

Although there are about 5 dozen clans, the prefix **HA**, and suffix **Y**, are added to all one. Corresponding to grandchild Yimnah, is the Yimnah clan (no suffix or prefix is added).

Why? Rashi answers by pointing out that the prefix and suffix in Hebrew are letters. **HA** is simply the letter **Hey**; while **Y** is simply the letter **Yud**. The letters of **Yud Hey** spell the name of God, **YaH**, thus

adding an element of the Divine to each clan. However, the one exception, Yimnah, *already* starts with a Y=**Yud** and terminates with a H = **Hey**. Thus, Yimnah already has the Divine name affixed to its name and need not receive an additional one.

The Rashi Newsletter contributes the following: Certainly, we see *intent* in affixing the Yud-Hey to each name since it was affixed to all 5 dozen names that didn't have it but not affixed to the one name that did have it. So, we have intent. But what is the grammatical basis?

The grammatical basis is a *pun*. In my article, *Biblical Puns*, (JBQ, 34(3), 2006), I cite secular literary authorities who consider puns in secular literature as simply another accepted method of indicating meaning. It is simply another grammatical rule. In fact, there is a classification scheme for puns and there are about one dozen puns. Puns that arise from misspellings of words (e.g. by adding prefix and suffix letters) are called metaplasms. They are an accepted method of indicating meaning.

Let me put it this way. If while you were growing up, besides learning how to conjugate verbs you practiced creating puns in your written class exercises. If so, you would not be surprised that they occur in the Bible and have specific meaning and use.

Accordingly, we classify this Rashi as using the **Grammar Method** since puns are a method of grammar and spelling puns, metaplasms is a major category of puns.

Rashi does go a step further. He doesn't suffice with stating *Each clan had an element of the Divine, Yud-Hey, Yah, affixed to it*. Rashi explains possible reasons for emphasizing this divinity. *Probably the Egyptians would tease the Jews for guarding their ancestry claiming that the Egyptian taskmasters has relations with their maternal ancestors. Not so! To contradict this, the element of the Divine, the Yud-Hey, Yah, is affixed to each name*. (And in fact, the Egyptian caste system strongly discouraged contamination of elite Egyptians having relations with Jewish slaves).

So, as you can see: Even though this Rashi is based on a pun, there is internal evidence that it is an author-intended pun and there is secular scholarship attesting to the use of such devices to communicate meaning.

Daily Rashi Grammar Nu29-19b Sat Jul 7, 2018

Background: The Bible is describing the offerings during the 8 days of Succoth. Note the changing language in the verses below

- **Nu29-24** Do according to ordinance;....besides the up offering and its libation
- **Nu29-19** Do according to ordinance; ...besides the up offering and its libationsu
- **Nu29-31** Do according to ordinance; besides the up offering and *their* libationsu

Nu29-33 Do according to ordinancesu...besides the up offering and its libation

Note the differences indicated by the bold, italics, underline.

The following beautiful explanation is due to Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch:

Rashi: The plurals, indicated by the terminal *s*, as well the plural *their* vs *its*, point to several libations. Traditionally, the only libation we know is the wine libation mentioned in **Nu15**. However, the text hints that during Succoth we also had another libation, hence the plurality, though we are not told what it is. It was in fact the water libation.

Compare Rav Hirsch's beautiful explanation to Rashi's literal text:

Rashi: *The plural is indicated in the Hebrew by the suffix letters **mem** and **mem** as well as the plural-indicating **yud**. These three letters spell **mem-yud-mem**, the Hebrew word for water showing that there was a water libation on Succoth.*

But why did Rashi ignore Rabbi Hirsch's straightforward grammatical

explanation and give a word play? I answer this in my article cited below. Rashi frequently

- *derived* comments grammatically
- *expressed* them by word play.

The real driving force of the Rashi was the **Grammar-Method**. However, Rashi wanted people to remember the comment; memory is not always aided by logic; it is frequently aided by word play. So, the word play Rashi used has the sole purpose of assisting memory while Rashi believed in the grammatical explanation which he did not explicitly state (Because it was obvious - everyone knows the plural)

This is another example of a Rashi comment that appears fanciful and far-stretched but is grammatically sound. It

- *Appears* that Rashi *derived* the existence of the water libation from the play on letters, *Mem-Yud-Med*
- *Actually*, is derived from the plural indicated by the *Mem* and *Yud*.
- The fact that the *Mem* and *Yud* indicating the plural *just happen to spell Mayim, water*, is a happy coincidence which Rashi uses not to *derive* the midrash but to help *memorize* it.

References

Peshat and Derassh: A New Intuitive and Analytic Approach, **Tradition**, 118#4, pp 327-342, **1980**.

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHIRULE

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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