

The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 30 #21, Feb. 7, 2019

Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, TeZaVeH

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We cover some innocuous looking Rashis this week and show subtleties. Please send questions on Rashi to RashiYomi@GMail.Com

Ex29-01a seems like a simple Rashi. The verse says *This is the procedure you shall do to them [the priests] in order to sanctify them to me. Take an ox... for a sin offering and a ran...*

Rashi: Says that the Hebrew conjugation that we have underlined and translated into *take* is an alternate conjugation to the usual conjugation for taking. The

- Usual conjugation is **Kuph-Ceth**
- **Ex29-01** uses **Lamed-Kuph-Ceth**

Rashi explicitly says that these are two alternate conjugation with the same meaning.

This seems simple enough. Rashi seems to say that there are two forms to the verb and they have the same meaning.

But Rashi never says that these two forms are interchangeable. In fact, a proper procedure would be to attempt to determine a rule governing the *form* of the conjugation.

- The only other verse with **Lamed-Kuph-Ceth** in a command form is **Prv20-16**. In both **Prv20-16** and **Ex29-01** the command *take* begins a sentence.
- However, there are several other verses where *take* begins a verse such as **Gn33-11**, **Ex08-02**, **Nu03-45**, **Nu07-05**, **Nu08-06** and they use the **Kuph-Ceth** form.

So we have made an attempt to find a rule but it didn't work out. My point here is that Rashi is

simply telling you there is no *meaning* difference; he is not discouraging you from finding a *form* difference. In this particular case, I know of no such rule but in many other cases I have found such a rule. They are worthwhile looking for.

On both **Ex27-20d** and **Ex29-42a** the word *tamid* occurs: i) the candelabra must be lit *tamid* ii) the daily offering must be offered *tamid*.

Rashi explains that *tamid* means

- Continually, or
- Continuously

These are English concepts which are not reflected in Hebrew semantics.

- Continually, once a day or once a week
- Continuously, means at all times

Rashi explains that the daily offering and the lighting of the candelabra happen *continually* (twice a day for the candelabra). Contrastively, the Temple Bread is set on the Temple Table *continuously*.

An important point should be noted here. In this particular case English has a richer set of nuances than Hebrew. The semantics of English concepts helps shed light on the multiple nuances of the Hebrew terms.

Very often, because God is the Author of the Bible, we expect from the Bible a precision that is not there. In fact, some of the post-science

era languages like English have more precision in many terms than Hebrew.

In a similar manner, the word *and* in English has a precise meaning endowed by the important of this connective to computers. Contrastively, in Hebrew, the letter *vav* can mean *any* conjunction: *and, or, but* etc.

This is an important principle. Our last Rashi example in this issue is similar

A fundamental Rashi principle of meaning that is relevant to all languages is that words can be named by *form, function, and substance*. For example, a *glass* is named by what it is made of, its substance, the *UN* is named by its *function and purpose* to unify the nations, while the *pentagon* is named by its form, since it is a five-way building.

Very often, languages will use body organs to name things: For example, in English, we speak about the *handle* of a utensil, the *legs* of a table, etc.

In this week's and last week's parshah the word *tzelah* meaning *rib* occurs and refers

- To the side of a chest (resembling rib form)
- To the point of a chest (the *rib of the side*) (resembling the poking protrusion aspect of a rib)

The point of this is as in the previous Rashi: Words in Biblical Hebrew need not be precise; they may have a plasticity with a spectrum of explanations.

To recap: We have presented three examples where Hebrew is deliberately vague while Hebrew is precise

- *Vav* can mean *and, or, ...*
- *Tzelah* can mean *side* or *point*
- *Tamid* can mean *continually* or *continuously*.

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES

A Lightning Summary with Examples

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Rule I-REFERENCE: EXAMPLE: Dt26-05d *We went down to Egypt with a few people* explained by Gn46-27: with 70 people

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Rule 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 (e.g. Dt34-10a) egg 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)** *Marchese* means pot; *Machinate* 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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Rule III-GRAMMAR: EXAMPLE: BA-ah means COMING not CAME(Gn46-26a)
EXAMPLE: A grammatical conjugation in the Hitpa'el if 1st root letter is Tzade (Gn44-16a)

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Rule IV-PARALLELISM: EXAMPLE: (Ex20-04) Don't **POSSESS** the gods of others Don't **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESS**ion & **MAKING** of idols are prohibited

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Rule V-CONTRADICTION: EXAMPLE: (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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Rule VI-STYLE: RABBI ISHMAEL RULES:

EXAMPLE: (Simple verses should be generalized): (Rashi Pesachim 6) (Dt25-04a) *Don't MUZZLE an OX while THRESHING* RASHI: Don't STOP any WORKING ANIMAL from eating

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Rule VII-FORMATting: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition): Ex12-09c) 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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Rule 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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Rule 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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Rule 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