

The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 31#3, Mar. 28th, 2019 *Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, TaZRiaH*

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*We need questions! Please **send questions on Rashi to RashiYomi@GMail.Com** I try and bring variety to the RashiYomi newsletters. Today I simply do a collection of the first 7 consecutive Rashis in the Garment Leprosy chapter and show how each of them follows from the Rashi rules. However, you get your share of excitement: I bring an intriguing Rashi-Ibn Ezra controversy; this is must for those who are interested in parshanuth: I carefully show why Ibn Ezra felt compelled to do say as he did and then show how Rashi is nevertheless correct. Hope you enjoy. Also, in this issue, I introduce the idea of color-coding the text which helps in seeing the Parallelisms.*

Biblical Text: Lv13-48a,b,c 52a

When a garment has leprosy

- 1)In a woolen garment or
- 2)In a flax garment or
- 3){In warp or
- 4){In woof
- {----- **for** wool or}
- {-----**for** linen}
- **5)In hide or**
- **6)In processed hide**

{Then} He shall burn the

- 1,2) The garment or
- 3){The warp or
- 4){The woof
- {----- **In** wool or}
- {-----**In** linen}
- 5,6) The hide utensil

One Rashi comment can immediately be inferred from #5 and #6 in yellow. Do you see the use of the **Rashi Parallelism Method**? Do you see how one verselet has *processed* while the other doesn't? Now you can understand immediately the Rashi comment.

Biblical Text

- **5)In hide or**
- **6)In processed hide**

Rashi: In **raw** hide or **processed** hide.

We next look at the prepositions highlighted in green.

Step 1: As you can see one verse used the preposition *for* while the other verse used the preposition *in*. The RadaQ and many other grammarians point out that the four basic Hebrew prepositions, *in*, *for*, *from*, *like* all interchange. That is right, sometimes you will find *from* meaning *to* and sometimes you will find *to* meaning *from*! Now we can instantly understand the Rashi:

Rashi:

For wool or **for** linen means *of* wool or *of* linen

In wool or **in** linen means *in* wool or *in* linen.

The verselets can be read using *of* vs. *for*, *in*

- 3){In warp or
- 4){In woof
- {----- **of** wool or}
- {-----**of** linen }
- -----
- 3){The warp or
- 4){The woof
- {----- **of** wool or}
- {-----**of** linen }

Step 2: But the reader can demur: Why didn't the text say that? Why did the text use *for* instead of *of* or instead of *in*?

Step 3: To answer this let us try using the closed word to *of* in Hebrew, *in*, which is used in the rest of the verse. Here is how the verse would look:

Biblical Text: Lv13-48a,b,c 52a

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- 2)**In** a flax garment or
- 3){**In** warp or
- 4){**In** woof
- {--**in** wool or}
- {--**in** linen}
- **5)In hide or**
- **6)In processed hide**

{Then} He shall burn the

- 1,2) The garment or
- 3){The warp or
- 4){The woof
- {----- **In** wool or}
- {-----**In** linen}
- 5,6) The hide utensil

Do you see what happens? If *in* is used the way it is used in the other verse cited above, then the reader gets confused. It looks like there is a list of 8 items: *in wool garments*, *in linen garments*, *in warp*, *in woof*, *in wool*, *in linen*, *in hide*, *in processed hide*. But *in wool* or *in linen* are not separate list items: They explain the *warp* and *woof*, that the warp and woof are made of wool or linen. Therefore, to separate *in wool* or *in*

linen from the list, the biblical Author used a different preposition so that it is understood that *wool* or *linen* applies to *warp*, *woof* and are not separate list items.

Biblical Text: Lv13-48a,b,c 52a

When a garment has leprosy

- 1)In a woolen garment or
- 2)In a flax garment or
- 3){In warp or
- 4){In woof
- {----- **for** wool or}
- {-----**for** linen}
- **5)In hide or**
- **6)In processed hide**

In summary, the verse reads clearer and better by using *for* instead of *in*.

To capture the nuances of the Hebrew in the next Rashi, we will improvise in English translation thus enabling one to feel the tone of the Rashi.

Lv13-49a,b

And this leprosy is *greenen* or *reded* [whether] in the garment, or in the hide, or in the warp, or in the woof, or in any hide utensil....

Rashi: *Greenen* means pure green. *Reded* means pure red.

Ibn Ezra: *Greenen* means dull green. *Reded* means dull red.

Step 1: We immediately see the controversy. The word repeats a syllable *green-eeen*, *red-ed*. What then does this repetition mean?

- *Rashi:* It means intensity and pure color
- *Ibn Ezra:* It means even a shallow dull color (hence the repetition to emphasize any amount of green or red)

Step 2: But what is the controversy? How can it be settled? One method is to look at other repeated syllable words. Psalms 45:3 provides an example

Ps 45:3

You are **beautiful** from all people
Grace is molded in your lips
Therefore, God has blessed you forever

From context, *beautiful* clearly means pure beauty, very beautiful. It couldn't possibly mean some beauty. Doesn't this prove Rashi's approach and refute Ibn Ezra's.?

Step 3: But startlingly, Ibn Ezra on Ps45:03 agrees with Rashi? How can this be? How can the Ibn Ezra say *very & pure* in one place and *shallow & dull* in another verse?

Ibn Ezra answers this:

- If the repetition is in the last syllables – *greeneen, reded* – it means dull
- If the repetition is in a non-last syllable – *beautitiful* – it means very and pure.

Step 4: But this is beginning to *sound* fishy. Why go out of your way to make a distinction between last and non-last syllables? Why not simply take the easy way out and say repetition denotes intensity and purity?

In other words what is really driving the Ibn Ezra to his position?

Step 5: To do this we have to look at more examples. In fact, in all but two examples the context does not contradict an interpretation of *very and intense*. But there are two interpretations where this is not obvious. The Ibn Ezra did not see an easy way out and so invented this distinction of last vs. first syllable. We however will examine these two cases and show that *very and intense* is consistent. Therefore, the Ibn Ezra has been answered. In fact, the Talmud follows the way Rashi interprets and it is very likely that they knew of all examples. So, let us look at the two examples.

Step 6:

Ps38-11

My heart is *merchantchanted*,
My strength has left me
The clarity of my vision is also not with me

What does *merchant* have to do with the heart?
Anyone who has ever seen marketplace

bargaining knows the characteristic give and take of bids and offers. So, *merchanting* can refer to this back and forth type motion. *Merchantchanted* would then refer to an intense back and forth motion similar to the English *my heart is racing*.

Undoubtedly Ibn Ezra saw the phrases *strength has left me, eyes have dimmed* and concluded that the phrase must denote heart weakness consistent with *dull and shallow*. But a *racing* heart is weak! The Psalmist is describing helplessness and does so with one characteristic of depression and freight, a racing heart, a heart intensely going back and forth as in the market.

So far so good. We need not resort to the Ibn Ezra's approach and can retain Rashi's approach.

Step 7: The second example is in the figure immediately below

Song 1:6 – Version 1 (Ibn Ezra)

Do not be afraid of [coming to] me
Even though I have been *blacklacked*
Stared at by the sun

Song 1:6 Version 2 (Rashi)

Do not be afraid of [coming to] me
Even though I have been *daybreakbroken*
Stared at by the sun

The context seems to be describing a woman who is tanned, stared at by the sun. She tells her lover not to be afraid to come to her despite her appearance.

The Hebrew root for sunburnt is **Shin-Cheth-Resh** which can mean *daybreak* or *black*. Let us now investigate the implications of repetition according to Ibn Ezra and Rashi.

Ibn Ezra: If **Shin-Cheth-Resh** means black then indeed a sunburnt person is dull-black. The tanned person is certainly not intensely black. In fact, a tan looks brownish and would qualify as a weak, dull, shallow, or "somewhat" black.

Now we understand the Ibn Ezra. He looked at this case and felt compelled to interpret the repetition as *dull*. He then examined other double-syllables and found some had to be interpreted as *intense*. So, he invented his theory about whether the doubling was on the last or non-last syllable.

But this is all unnecessary

Rashi: **Shin-Cheth-Resh** means daybreak, the first exposure to the sun. The tanned person has indeed been intensely exposed to the sun and hence is *daybreakedback*. This description of tanning as intense exposure to sun is consistent with the second phrase in Song 1:6, *the sun has stared at me*.

Step 8: Summary: Here are the main points

- There are about a dozen biblical verbs which have a doubling of one of their syllables.
- In some cases – for example, *beautitiful* – the doubling clearly refers to intensity and pureness
- In some cases – for example, *tanned, racing heart* – the doubling could denote
 - Weakness (weak heart or weak black appearance) or
 - Intensity (racing heart or intensely exposed to the sun)
- We feel that Ibn Ezra overlooked the *intensity* approach in some cases leading him to make many distinctions.
- However, the simplest approach is repetition of syllables denotes intensity and that can explain all cases.
- The *intensity, pure* approach is also consistent with the Talmud's approach.

Praise Be Him Who Chose Them & Their Learning

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

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

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)

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

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.

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