

Rashis Made Simple: For Tots, Children, Adults

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PART I: OVERVIEW

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Who is this presentation for

❖ Teaching Rashi to

- Children
- Teenagers
- Adults

❖ Explain how Rashi is derived from verse text

❖ Explanation is both

- Consistent with *traditional explanations*
- Enables student *self-discovery*
- Intuitive, following *everyday conversation patterns*

GOALS:

What you can do after this presentation

- ❖ Reference: (Rashi Reference Method)
 - Point student to a verse and another chapter
 - Have student explain the verse using other chapter
- ❖ Meaning / Synonyms (Rashi method)
 - Have student independently discover Rashi using
 - Hebrew-English dictionaries
 - Verse context
- ❖ Parallelism (Rashi method)
 - Have student create a parallelism table
 - Teach student/child how to independently
 - Correlate table nuances with Rashi comments

GOALS- What you can do – Con.

- ❖ You can teach these methods
 - After teaching reading Rashi script
 - Before teaching Rashi script
 - Using English or Hebrew (I have done both)
- ❖ You can use these methods
 - By topic (not by weekly Parshah)
 - By weekly Parshah
 - Mixed: Teach weekly Parshah and devote time to studying methods
- ❖ You can teach these methods + Traditional Rashi

Who are we?

Brief History of RashiYomi.Com

❖ **WHO**

- Founded by Dr. Russell Jay Hendel
- Based on Rashi Lectures of Rabbi Soloveitchick
- Several published articles in refereed journals

❖ **GOALS** – What are we trying to do

- Explain Rashi using everyday conversation
- 10 Major principles; 30 Major subprinciples
- Newsletters illustrate how to apply principles

What is New in this Presentation

❖ FORMER PRESENTATIONS - OLD

- *All* Rashi rules presented
- But teacher (mothers) & students found this hard

❖ THIS PRESENTATION – NEW

- Only simple Rashi rules emphasized
- Simple = *easy* to understand; *quick* to apply
- Three rules selected: *Citation, Meaning, Parallelism*
- Rules adapted to levels: *tots, children, teenagers*
- Easy to learn and apply
- Sources for further examples given

What is New - continued

- ❖ Why are these 3 rules simple: easy & quick?
- ❖ Citation / reference rule:
 - Rule uses two texts, easy/quick to look up
 - One text illuminates meaning of 2nd text
- ❖ Meaning rule:
 - Rule uses meaning
 - Quick /easy to look up in e.g. Heb /Eng dictionary
- ❖ Parallelism rule
 - We present special visual technique for parallelism
 - Quick / easy to spot differences + relate to Rashi

PART II – INTRODUCTORY EXAMPLES

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How to use this part

- ❖ 1 Example for each of 3 rules this presentation
 - 1) Citation – Dt26-05d – From Passover Haggadah
 - 2) Meaning – Lv02-05a,07a – Use of dictionary
 - 3) Parallelism – Ex20-03a – Ten Commandments
- ❖ Biblical & Rashi texts, and Explanation
- ❖ Teach children at 3 levels: tot – teenager
- ❖ Enable self-discovery of Rashi comments

EXAMPLE 1: Dt26-05d

Comes from Passover Haggadah

- ❖ **Biblical text:** *An Aramaean (Laban) tried to destroy my father (Jacob); He went down to Egypt, He dwelled there with a few people*
- ❖ **Rashi Text:** Few people: 70 people.
- ❖ **Explanation: Traditional and Rashiomi:**
 - Rashi uses **citation** or **reference** method
 - **Cite Dt10-22:** *With 70 souls, your fathers went down to Egypt.*

EXAMPLE 1: Continued

- ❖ How do I use this to strengthen teaching?
- ❖ ANSWER: Depends on Level of student
- ❖ I use *Tot, Child, Teenage level*
- ❖ Alternatively: *Elementary, some knowledge, research capacity*
- ❖ Encourage Self discovery: Strengthens student retention and student satisfaction
- ❖ Lets examine each level separately

Example 1: Tot level

- ❖ Point to verse ...*went down with a few people*
- ❖ Read Dt10-22 ...*with 70 souls ...went down*
- ❖ Ask child what words in Dt10-22 explain few people
- ❖ You may have to go to each word in Dt10-22, point to it, and ask if this helps understand few people
- ❖ After child derives, show him Rashi comment
- ❖ Make sure he smiles (He discovered Rashi!)

Example 1: Child Level

- ❖ Point to verse... *Went down with a few people*
- ❖ Ask child to read by himself, Dt10
- ❖ Ask child to discover what few people means
- ❖ Most children (who know how to read a chapter of Bible) can do this exercise
- ❖ If they can't read Hebrew yet, perhaps read to him in English or you read to him

Example 1: Teenage Level

- ❖ Point to verse... *Went down with a few people*
- ❖ Ask the student “How many people”
- ❖ Tell student to look through bible to find out
- ❖ Note: This exercise may become a project in which student has to work a while
- ❖ *What to do: If student finds another answer*
- ❖ That’s fine. E.g. Gn46-8:27 lists all 70 people
- ❖ Explain: Multiple ways to justify Rashi

Example 1: Traditional Approach

- ❖ Supplement or omit traditional approaches
- ❖ My advice:
 - Leave time for self discovery
 - Leave time for traditional approaches
- ❖ Don't exclusively do either. Each important
 - Self discovery: Increases retention & satisfaction
 - Traditional approaches: tradition, continuity

Example 1: 3 approaches

❖ 1) Rashi Script

- Encouraged. But meaning can be done independently
- I have taught meaning first, script 2nd or both together

❖ 2) Rashi commentators

- Supplement what done here
- *Sifsay Chachamim, Chizkuni, Ra'am,*
- Can go to them first; then do analysis done here

❖ 3) Midrashic Sources

- Supplement what done here with Midrashic sources
- Explain that Rashi derived from Midrash

Example 2: Lv02-05a,07a

Meaning / Synonym rule

❖ Biblical texts:

- (v5) If your offering is minchah on a *Machavath*
- (v7) If your offering is a *Marcheseth* minchah

❖ Rashi Texts (slightly abridge for this presentation)

- *Marcheseth*: Refers to a deep vessel. Since the vessel is deep, the oil is not burnt and bubbles. Any food item softened by a liquid appears *bustling & shaking*
- *Machavath*: Refers not to a deep vessel but shallow vessel. Since oil floats on bottom, it is burnt making what is cooked hard.

Example 2 – Continued

- ❖ How do I use this to strengthen teaching?
- ❖ There are several approaches
- ❖ The approaches apply to all children levels
 - 1) Read Rashi first; think of English translations 2nd
 - 2) Read Bible 1st with dictionary; read Rashi 2nd

Example 2 – Approach 1

- ❖ Rashi says
 - *Machavath = shallow cooking utensil*
 - *Marchesheth = deep cooking utensil*
- ❖ So bring child in kitchen
- ❖ Examine many cooking utensils
- ❖ Child should eventually identify
 - *Machavath = (frying) pan*
 - *Marchesheth = pot*
- ❖ Discuss which utensils are good for which foods

Example 2 – Approach 1

- ❖ Just show child biblical texts
- ❖ Child should attempt to ascertain meanings
- ❖ Some good free Eng-Heb dictionaries
 - <http://www.doitinhebrew.com/translate/>
 - <http://www.morfix.co.il/en/>
- ❖ In this case: *Machavath* = *pan*
- ❖ *Marchesheth* not in modern Hebrew; so translate as *pot*
- ❖ Ask child difference between *pot* / *pan*
- ❖ Discuss what *pot* / *pan* good for cooking

Example 2 - continued

Issues common to all approaches

- ❖ Discuss synonyms
- ❖ Discuss relation between *form & meaning*
- ❖ Discuss what different utensils good for
- ❖ Discuss Biblical – Modern Hebrew contrast
- ❖ Discuss lack/scarcity of dictionaries, Rashi's time
- ❖ Compare different English translations
(Sometimes the same and sometimes different)

Example 3 – Ex20-03a

Parallel Passages

- ❖ I use a table method to present biblical texts

Do not	have	Gods of others
Do not	Make	Idols, images of heaven or earth...

Example 3 - continued

❖ Rashi text:

➤ Why does it say *have no gods of others*? Because it says *do not make idols*. Thus I only hear a prohibition of making. How do I know that I shouldn't keep something already made. Because it says *do not have*

❖ Traditional explanations:

- Rashi distinguishes between words in 2nd column in table: *have, make*
- The table gives a visual presentation facilitating comprehension

Example 3 - Continued

- ❖ How do we use this to strengthen teaching
- ❖ We again offer several approaches
- ❖ We can base them on student level
- ❖ At the
 - Tot level: Child notices critical textual difference
 - Child level: Child can produce meaningful examples
 - Teenage level: Child can make abstract distinctions

Example 3 – Tot Level

- ❖ If tot's manual dexterity is up to it
 - Tot should draw table and line up similar words
- ❖ If tot's manual dexterity not up to it
 - Teacher should draw table
 - Tot should identify which columns are same/different
- ❖ Rashi can then be taught
- ❖ Note: The advantage of doing this is getting the student into the habit of seeking not any distinctions but meaningful distinctions

Example 3 – Child level

- ❖ The child should be encouraged to draw table
- ❖ Child typically fills in some columns but
- ❖ Child typically may need help on others
- ❖ Teacher should encourage seeking examples illustrating the distinctions. Give examples
 - *How can you make something without having it?*
 - *How can you have something without making it?*
- ❖ Child may notice other columnar differences not commented by Rashi. This encourages further midrashic study (if teacher knows sources)

Example 3 – Teenage level

- ❖ Some teenagers may be able to do this exercise; others may need help
- ❖ Rashi distinguishes *having*, *making*
 - What is word for *having*
 - What is work for *making*
- ❖ *Answers: ownership vs. production*
- ❖ Teenager may notice other columnar differences not commented on by Rashi
- ❖ Teachers should encourage use of sources (e.g. *Torah Temimah*) to obtain answers

Example 3 – Other approaches

- ❖ In which sequence do you do following
 - Read Rashi answer
 - Attempt to understand table
- ❖ Discussion of interaction of
 - Biblical exegesis (Differences give rise to Rashi)
 - Halachic requirements (Do we practice these?)

Summary

- ❖ We have examined three examples of three Rashi rules
 - Citation and Reference
 - Meaning
 - Parallel passages
- ❖ We have learned how to quickly & easily
 - Compare 2 verses for illumination on each other
 - Use dictionaries and household items to obtain insight
 - Construct parallel tables; see critical nuance differences

What we have not done

- ❖ As mentioned the Rashi website has 10 major rules
- ❖ We have chosen only the simplest 3 in this presentation
- ❖ These 3 rules are simple: i) easy to learn ii) quick to apply
- ❖ These 3 rules can be applied at different age levels
- ❖ The other 7 rules require more training
- ❖ In discussing Rashi meaning we advocate starting with these 3 rules.

PART 3

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

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Remainder of presentation

❖ We

- Restrict ourselves to these three rules
- Give other punchy examples
- Give resources for finding examples

❖ We do not

- Analyze again in detail the 3 child levels
 - We may just present verses without citing Rashi texts and traditional explanations (left to reader)
- Explain every verse detail

A Note on Resources

- ❖ Rashi website: www.Rashiyomi.com
- ❖ 17 Years old – lots of material
- ❖ Nothing ever taken down!
- ❖ Some material more suitable for homeschooling
- ❖ Some material does not hit spot
- ❖ Specific webpages and examples given
- ❖ Feel free to browse for more
- ❖ Feel free to ask me if you want some feature
 - RashiYomi@GMail.Com
- ❖ All material is free – we ask acknowledgement

3A) Ki – The four meanings

- ❖ A famous midrash cited by Rashi states:
- ❖ The Hebrew word **Ki** has 4 meanings
 - *if (when), that, rather, because*
- ❖ An excellent exercise (all ages)
 - To read a verse with **Ki**
 - Rashi may or may not comment on this verse
 - Have child decide which of 4 meanings fits best
- ❖ These Rashis illustrate the **Meaning** rule

3A- Ki – Resources - continued

- ❖ Overview: www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-11.htm
- ❖ Because: (*Ki* meaning *because*)
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-1.htm
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-6.htm
- ❖ Rather / perhaps (*Ki* meaning *perhaps*)
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-2.htm
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-4.htm
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-5.htm
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-9.htm
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-10.htm

3A - Ki – Continued

Resources - Continued

- ❖ That (*Ki* means that)
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-3.htm
 - www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-8.htm
- ❖ When / if – www.Rashiyomi.com/ki-7.htm

3A - MEANING

GENERAL RESOURCE

- ❖ Goto www.Rashiyomi.com/calendar.htm
- ❖ Click on dropdown in upper middle left
 - DropDown title is *Rashiyomi summaries*
- ❖ Recommended: Items dealing with meaning
- ❖ Example: www.Rashiyomi.com/al-5.htm
 - Six meanings of the Hebrew word *al*
 - *On, with, in, to near, after*
 - This is my gathering of Rashis on *al*
 - Perhaps you, or other source, has different approach

3A- Meaning

General Resource continued

- ❖ Here is an example where other Rashi commentators have a different organization than me.
- ❖ Nevertheless the list of verses serves as a springboard for learning
- ❖ www.Rashiyomi.com/all-18.htm
- ❖ The Hebrew word *kl* can mean
 - All – no exceptions
 - whole – all parts
 - All groups

3A - Meaning – Tips for Home Schooling

❖ Tot level

- Present the possible meanings
- Read the verse in English with one Hebrew word
- Ask which meaning fits best
- If necessary go over each one; prompt child to say that some interpretations are silly (wrong translation)

3A- Meaning – Tips Continued

❖ Child level

- Present the possible meanings
- Read the verse in English with one Hebrew word
- Ask which meaning fits best
- As this stage prompting should not be necessary
- Discuss if there is one best meaning or maybe 2

❖ Teenage level

- Ask child to suggest best English translation

❖ All Levels

- Encourage English translations

3B - Citations

- ❖ **Citation** are easiest of rules to learn
- ❖ But Citation / reference requires work
- ❖ We already indicated use of levels
 - Tot: Read 2 verses; ask what one verse teaches on other
 - Child: Read one verse; ask child to read chapter and find verse illuminating first verse
 - Teenager: Ask child to find illuminating verse

3B-Citations / Reference - continued

- ❖ There are 3 approaches when teaching Rashi
 - Weekly Parshah approach - each week go over Rashis in the weekly Torah reading
 - Rashi by topic – you can have a little module of Rashi by rule type. So you can spend a month going over Rashis with meaning, a month going over Rashis with references
 - Mixed type – Do learn Rashis by Parshah but also spend time on learning one rule in depth

3B-Citation / Reference - Continued

❖ SOURCE:

<http://www.rashiyomi.com/h32n2.htm#LIST270a>

- ❖ This source contains about 30 examples of the citation / reference method
- ❖ In many of these examples the biblical text explicitly says *as He said* or something similar pointing to a cross reference
- ❖ These are perhaps the most straightforward examples to illustrate Rashi rules

3B-Citation / Reference - Continued

- ❖ One example from this source
- ❖ Ex12-35a *Jews did as Moses said: They borrowed from Egypt silver utensils, gold utensils and clothes*
- ❖ Ex11-02 [God speaking to Moses] *Please speak in the ears of the nation: Let men borrow from friends and women from friends silver vessels and gold vessels*
- ❖ Thus Ex11-02 is the verse that Ex12-35a **refers to.**

3C - Parallelim

❖ Parallelism is

- Easy to implement – simply draw a table
- Hard to fully follow – how does an extra word imply Rashi

❖ HomeSchooling Tip – Question: A but not B?

- If verse X has word *w*
- But verse Y has word *v* or no word
- You can ask the prompting question:
- *Give an example of w without v or v without w*
- Children starting at ages 8 or 9 can *begin* to answer
- You can then show Rashi's solution

3C - Parallelism

- ❖ We present 3 examples of tip
- ❖ After a while using this tip the parallelism Rashis may appear as the simple meaning of the text
- ❖ Part of the tip is to distinguish between
 - The actual conclusion
 - The prompting question
 - The prompting question is a means to end
 - Prompting questions appears technical and picky
 - Therefore emphasize the conclusion – which is simple

3C - Parallelism

- ❖ In the 3 examples below
- ❖ We present the following
 - Parallelism table
 - Identification of what is different
 - Rashi text and if necessary, Jewish law
 - Illustrate how homeschooling tip, *Give an example of w without v, or v without w*, facilitates understanding the Rashi
- ❖ No matter how you teach Rashi,
- ❖ Encourage student creation of parallelism tables

3C1 – Parallelism

Lv25-53a

- ❖ See Biblical text in Table below
- ❖ Note the extra word *in front of your eyes*
 - This phrase is present in v 53, non-Jewish owner
 - This phrase is absent in v 43, Jewish owner
- ❖ **Rashi:** In front of your eyes: *In other words, if you see it.*
- ❖ Jewish Law: Courts only interfere (with violations of labor mistreatment of slaves) if
- ❖ The violation is in public (visible)

3C1 – Parallelism Continued

Lv25-53a

Lv25-43	Discusses Jewish owners	<i>Don't work-abuse slaves</i>	
Lv25-53a	Discusses Non Jewish owners	<i>Don't work-abuse slaves</i>	<i>In front of your eyes</i>

3C1 – Parallelism Continued

Lv25-53a

- ❖ Example of prompting question
- ❖ *How can you do something that is not in front of your eyes?*
- ❖ Answer: If you do it inside your house without anyone seeing
- ❖ **Rashi**: So if a non Jewish owner privately work-abuses slaves, the courts don't have to go and investigate

3C2-Parallelism

Lv14-28a

- ❖ Note the difference in the table below
- ❖ *On the blood vs. On the place of the blood*
- ❖ **Rashi:** On the place of the blood: Even if the blood was cleaned away. It is the place that determines not the blood.

Lv14-14 & 17	Rich man's lepor offering	<i>Place blood...on right thumb</i>	<i>Place oil on the</i>	<i><u>blood</u></i>
Lv14-25 & 28	Poor man's lepor offering	<i>Place blood...on right thumb</i>	<i>Place oil on the</i>	<i><u>Place of blood</u></i>

3C2 – Parallelism

Lv14-53a Continued

- ❖ Homeschooling tip: Prompting question
- ❖ *Give an example where oil is placed on the place of blood but not on the blood*
- ❖ Answer: Suppose blood got washed away but you know where it was and place oil there. Then you have placed oil on the place of blood but not on the blood

3C2- Parallelism

Lv14-53a Continued

- ❖ We can use the parallelism homeschooling tip for different child levels differently
- ❖ Teenager:
 - Teacher asks the question
 - Student can respond
- ❖ Tot:
 - Teacher gives both question and answer
 - Tot is asked to confirm that answer illustrates
 - *on place of blood* but not *on blood itself*

3C3 – Parallelism

Nu22-11b

- ❖ Prompting question (See table below)
 - King of Moab asked that Jews be *expelled from land*
 - Evil Balak summarized: He wants Jews *expelled*
- ❖ Prompting question: How can you *expel* but not *expel from land*
- ❖ Possible answers: (Good to emphasize several)
 - *Expel from land and water also*
 - *Expel altogether from existence*

3C3 – Parallelism

Nu22-11b

❖ Actual Rashi

- Evil Balak: Wanted Jews exterminated – expelled from everything
- King Moab: Just wanted Jews expelled from his land



Nu22-06	King Moab	<i>Expel Jews</i>	<i>From land</i>
Nu22-11b	Evil Balak	<i>Expel Jews</i>	

Concluding Remarks

- ❖ Try and practice these three techniques – *meaning, reference/citation, parallelism*
- ❖ You and child will then get use to them
- ❖ Some further resources are as follows
- ❖ www.Rashiyomi.com/rule.htm
 - Look for Newsletters with tables
 - I recommend only using rules: *Meaning, reference, parallelism*
- ❖ Write to me: RashiYomi@GMail.Com
- ❖ If you need something I'll produce it for free