

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Lech Lechah

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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.

We are currently in our 5 year, half-year cycle:

** For period: Oct 2012 - May 2013 - we studied the Grammar rule*

** For period: June 2013 - Sep 2013 - we studied the Reference rule*

** For period: Oct 2013 - May 2013 - we will study the Parallelism rule*

We are also devoting this series to home-schoolers. The Rashis will be presented in home-schooling format and can be used on any age group above 5. Nevertheless, the scholarly aspect of the Rashi will not be ignored: Citations and references are very popular in Rabbinic sermons and in Talmudic passages.

Here is a very simple example of parallelism: Gn49-11 states

(Because of the plenty in Judah's reign) Clothes are washed in wine

(Because of the plenty in Judah's reign) "Suth" [are washed] in blood-of-grapes

Rashi comment: Wine is parallel to blood-of-grapes, showing that blood-of-grapes means wine

Similarly, Clothes are parallel to suth showing that suth means cloathing.

Thus the parallelism method explores repeated verse phrases and allows inferences based on the repeated passages.

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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Reference - *Daily Rashi Sunday October 13, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn14-02e**

Commonality: Both the following verse phrases discuss *kingdoms*.

Questions: After the reviewing the five verses discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in the verses
- 2) What is different in the verses
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the verses to ascertain their context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper, it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

- **Gn14-01:02** Berah, King of Sedom,
- **Gn14-01:02** Birshah, King of Amarah
- **Gn14-01:02** Shinav, King of Admah
- **Gn14-01:02** ShemEver, King of Tzevoim
- **Gn14-01:02** -----, King of Belah, it is Tzoar.

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) All verses list kingdoms.
- 2) The last verse phrase omits the name of a King
- 3) The last verse phrase gives an alternate name for the kingdom

Rashi resolved this as follows: *Belah is not the name of a King, but rather the name of the Kingdom (city or country) over which the King reigned.*

Interestingly, Rashi does not, as we might expect, further explain the anomaly. Why is the name of this King omitted? Why are we told that Belah is the same as Tzoar?

Another, interesting point is Rashi's use of Grammar: Why doesn't for example Rashi interpret the sentence as "King of Belah, he is Tzoar?" That is how does Rashi know that Tzoar refers back to Belah, the country, not to the King? The answer is because the Hebrew word for "it" is feminine; it doesn't describe the King.

Reference - *Daily Rashi Monday/Tuesday Oct 14-15 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn13-10c,d**

Commonality: Both the following phrases describe "rich, beautiful, land."

Questions: After the reviewing the two verses discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both verses
- 2) What is different in both verses
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the supportive verses, cited afterwards, to ascertain context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

Gn13-10 Lot saw the Jordan valley: it was all watered

- **Gn13-10** ...Like a Garden of God
- **Gn13-10** ...Like, Egyptian land

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses mention similarities "like" to the Jordan valley
- 2) The verses differ in what the Jordan valley is compared to.

To fully answer the question of "why the difference" we must examine the following supportive verses.

- **Gn02-08:09** - *God planted a garden in Eden...and he blossomed from the ground all precious looking trees, good to eat*
- **Ex09-32:33** - (A description of the effects of the plague of hail on the land of Egypt) *The flax and barley were ruined...the wheat and spelt were not ruined (because they were still underground)*

Now we can explain how Rashi explained **Gn10-13**.

- The comparison of the Jordan valley to the *garden of God* refers to the Jordan's valley's beautiful trees

- The comparison of the Jordan valley to *Egyptian land* refers to the Jordan's valley good grains.

Was Rashi being picky and overly detailed? No! Rashi was simply emphasizing the **parallelism**: *Like a Garden of God Like Egyptian land*. Rashi was exploring *one* possible facet of this parallelism. This is the proper viewpoint!

Reference - *Daily Rashi Wednesday/Thursday Oct 16-17, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn13-13b,c**

Commonality: Both the following words discuss the evil of Sedom and Amarah.

Questions: After reviewing the two words discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both words
- 2) What is difference in both words
- 3) How would *you* explain the difference (Hint: You may have to look up the verses to ascertain their context)

After answering these questions, we will see how the great Rashi resolved them. Although Rashi's answer is deeper it is important for readers of Rashi to practice answering the Rashi questions by themselves in order to sharpen their textual focus thereby enriching the Rashi experience.

As a special treat today, we will show how a superficial reading of Rashi leads to an incorrect conclusion. By using the Talmud on which Rashi based himself we can obtain a deeper understanding of what Rashi tried to do.

Gn13-13 The people of Sedom

- **Gn13-13b** ...were *bad*
- **Gn13-13c** ...and *sinful*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both words indicate bad traits
- 2) The words differ in which bad traits are covered. But how do we find which bad traits are mentioned?

First review the following verses that contain the keywords bad and sinful. Then we

will examine Rashi's sources. Then we will give a new viewpoint on Rashi.

- **Gn34-09** (Joseph, refusing the advances of Potiphar's wife) How then can I do this great *bad* thing, and *sin* against God?
- **Dt15-09** Be careful (when the 7th year approaches) lest you think: "The 7th year is near", and you will have a *bad* eye on your poor brother and he will call out to God and it will be a *sin* unto thee.

As can be seen, the two verses **Gn34-09** and **Dt15-09** can be used to justify either of the views on the meaning of *bad* and *sinful*. Indeed, both bodily crimes like adultery and monetary crimes like withholding loans are equally described by the Bible as "bad" and "sinful" Two views are cited in Sanhedrin 109a

- *Bad* refers to bodily crimes (adultery); *sin* refers to monetary crime (no loans)
- *Bad* refers to monetary crime (no loans); *sin* refers to bodily crimes (adultery)

Why then did Rashi choose only one of these views? For Rashi says, "*bad, with their bodies and sinful with their money.*" My opinion is that Rashi was not taking sides (and therefore efforts to "justify" Rashi are incorrect). Rashi was *exploring the parallelism*. Like a principal instructing teachers "Go over with the students the views on parallelism on this verse e.g. *bad bodily, sinful monetarily,*" Rashi was simply citing *one* of the passages in the Talmud and expecting the teacher to explore *all* passages with the student. The goal was not to settle and determine a final answer but rather to explore and be aware of parallelism.

APPENDIX

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

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 (Hononyms)** 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*

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)

IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited

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.

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

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 dont 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

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

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.

X: SYMBOLISM: EXAMPLE: (Use of puns) (NuXX-XX) 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