

# The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on Chayay Sarah*

**Vol 20#24** - Adapted from **Rashi-is-Simple**

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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 tansitions in the Rashi Newsletter we welcome positive and negative comments as well as requests. Please send all comments to [RashiYomi@GMail.Com](mailto:RashiYomi@GMail.Com).*

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## Reference - *Daily Rashi Sunday Monday October 27 28, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn23-01a Gn25-07a**

Commonality: Both the following verse phrases discuss *years lived*

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.

- **Gn23-01a** Sarah's life: 100 years, 20 years, 7 years
- **Gn25-07a** Ishmael's life: 100 years, 75 years, 5 years
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- **Gn05-17** Mahallalel's life: 5 and 90 years, and 800 years
- **Gn05-20** Yered's life: 2 and 60 years and 900 years
- **Gn05-23** Chanoch's life: 5 and 60 years and 300 years

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) All verses list years lived
- 2a) The normal way (**Gn05**) is stating *years* twice with
- 2b) Digit and tens first (e.g. *5 and 60 years*) and hundreds last (e.g. *300 years*)
- 3a) **Contrastively**, Sarah and Ishmael list *years* three times with
- 3b) Hundreds first, tens second and digits last (*100 years, 20 years, 7 years*)

Rashi resolved this as follows: *By reversing the order there is a pun that we are not just talking about years lived but the quality of life: "The 100 year life" "The 20 year life" and "The 7 year life". Hence Rashi states Sarah had the maturity of a 100 year old, the beauty of a 20 year old and the innocence of a 7 year old.*

It is traditional to use the *too many words* approach to understand this Rashi. This approach basically says that *100 years, 20 years and 7 years* uses the word *years* 3

times. But we see above that it is normal to use *years* twice (See **Gn05** examples). In English we use *years* once: e.g. *127 years*. Here is a comparison

- English: 127 years
- Normal Hebrew: 7+20 years, + 100 years
- Sarah-Ishmael Example: 100 years, 20 years and 7 years

If the issue was *too many words* then the Bible should have used the English approach. But it didn't.

For this reason, I suggest that *too many words* is not a Rashi principle. The correct principle is violation of *parallel* patterns. In this case, the driving force of Rashi is the use of a different form in **Gn05** and **Gn23**.

## Reference - *Daily Rashi Tuesday Oct 29 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn24-47a**

The parallelism today is an example of *order* parallelism. The biblical scholars call this *chiastic* parallelism after the Greek letter *chi* which looks like the English letter *X* which depicts a criss-cross reversal of order.

Commonality: Both the following phrases describe "Eliezer finding Rivkah"

Questions: After 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.

- **Gn24-22:23** (Actual story) Eliezer 1) Placed bracelets on Rivkah 2) Asked who she is
- **Gn24-47** (Eliezer's recitation of the story) (Eliezer) 1) asked who she is 2) placed bracelets on her.

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses describe the discovery of Rivkah and giving her gifts (Bracelets)
- 2) The verses differ in order: What came first, the gifts or the inquiry

Rashi's approach to this order difference is to use common etiquette:

- *To discover Rivkah, Eliezer had to believe in God and create signs; as soon as he saw a charitable girl he knew he had found a wife, hence the gift came first and the inquiry (actually a confirmation) came second*
- *But in "negotiating" for Rivkah, Eliezer did not want to appear too superstitious. Hence he had to inquire on her identity before being sure he had found the proper family and only then could he give her a gift.*

*In other words, Rashi is giving advice to use a common-sense approach and leave God out when negotiating a business deal.*

## Reference - *Daily Rashi Wednesday Oct 30, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn24-02a**

Commonality: Both these verses use the Hebrew word **Zayin-Kuph-Nun**

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.

- **Gn24-01** *Abraham was old, (Zayin Kuph Nun) many years, blessed with all*
- **Gn24-02** *Abraham said to his servant, elder (Zayin Kuph Nun) of the house*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) In both verses **Zayin Kuph Nun** describes someone old
- 2) However *old* in **Gn24-01** is independent while in **Gn24-02** it is in *construct*

- You recognize the construct in English by the word *of* (*Elder of the house*)
- In Hebrew, you recognize the construct by a different form (*Zekan vs Zakayn*)

This is in fact what Rashi says: *The second occurrence of **Zayin-Kuph-Nun** is punctuated differently to indicate a construct: elder of the house*

So this Rashi uses *parallelism* to uncover a grammatical rule.

## Reference - *Daily Rashi Thursday Oct 31, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn24-07a**

Commonality: Both these verses refer to God.

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.

- **Gn24-03** *Abraham swore Eliezer by: God of Heaven and God of Earth*
- **Gn24-07** *Abraham recalls God's promise: God of Heaven swore to me*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses describe God
- 2) Contrastively,
  - **Gn 24-07** describes God when Abraham met Him; God only existed among angels (Heaven); Earthly beings didn't talk about God
  - **Gn24-03** describes God after Abraham met Him; God was now known as God of both Heaven and Earth See the Rashi comment for an explanation

Rashi: *Abraham encouraged people to talk about God, even if they were ordinary earthly people. Hence God was now God of Heaven and God of Earth. However, when Abraham met God, God was only God of Heaven. The earthly people did not*

*Speak about God.*

- You recognize the construct in English by the word *of* (*Elder of the house*)
- In Hebrew, you recognize the construct by a different form (*Zekan* vs *Zakayn*)

This is in fact what Rashi says: *The second occurrence of Zayin-Kuph-Nun is punctuated differently to indicate a construct: elder of the house*

So this Rashi uses parallelism to uncover a grammatical rule.

## 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

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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 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)

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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) (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