

# The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on VaYayShev*

## Vol 21#02- 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 transitions 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 Nov 24th, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn37-07b,c**

Background: Joseph dreamt about sheaves. His sheaves stood up and all other sheaves bowed to his sheaf.

Commonality: Both these verse phrases speak about the sheaves in Joseph's dream standing upright.

Questions: After reviewing the two verse phrases 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.

- **Gn37-07** *My sheaf became erect*
- **Gn32-07** *and also stood*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verse speak about *the sheaf assuming an upright position*
- 2) The differences between the two phrases is in nuance.
  - The first phrase mentions the act of becoming erect
  - The second phrase mentions the permanance of remaining erect.

Here is how we would translate the verse phrases to reflect this nuance:

- **Gn37-07** *My sheaf became erect*
- **Gn32-07** *and also remained standing*

Comment: The difference - *became erect, remained erect* - is something subtle, not explicit in the verses. If it is not explicit, what gives Rashi the right to so interpret?

The answer to this is very deep. It is part of the parallelism rule that the very *presence* of parallelism justifies that the 2nd half be interpreted as an extension of the 1st half even if the words don't explicitly justify this. In other words, parallelism is not just a statement about meaning but also about position. The 2nd repetition itself has a meaning, namely, that it extends the meaning of the first half.

This important point about parallelism occurs explicitly in the following book. In fact, this is one of Kugel's contributions to our understanding of parallelism.

### Reference

James L Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry, Parallelism and Its History*, Yale University, 1981.

## Reference - *Daily Rashi Monday November 25, 2013*

Rashis covered: **Gn37-07d**

Background: Today's verse discusses how Joseph's brothers hated him.

Commonality: Both the following phrases describe "Why Joseph's brothers hated him"

Questions: After reviewing the two phrases 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.

- **Gn37-07** And Joseph's brothers hated him
- because of this *dreams*
- and because of his *bad-mouthing* them

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verse phrases describe why Joseph's brothers hated him.

- 2) The two phrases speak about two distinct items
- The brothers hated Joseph because of his dreams
  - The brothers hated Joseph because he bad-mouthed and slandered them to their father.

How did Rashi know that the two phrases - dreams, bad-mouthing - were *different* causes rather than the same? That is, why didn't Rashi simply interpret "The brothers hated Joseph because of his dreams which bad-mouthed the brothers to their father?"

On a superficial level Rashi knew this because it explicitly says in **Gn37-02** *Joseph was 17 years old ... he was immature ... he bad-mouthed his brothers to their father*. Here Rashi uses the **reference** principle.

But there is a deeper level. Notice how the two phrases - *dreams, bad-mouthing* - are *both* introduced by the connective word *because*. This too is a principle of parallelism mentioned in the article below:

- When the connective word is repeated it creates a bullet effect; the two phrases are distinct
- When there is one connective word to two items, then the two items are synonymous (referring to each other).

### **Reference**

Russell Jay Hendel; *Biblical Formatting, The Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 35(1), pp. 17-27, 2007.

### **Reference - *Daily Rashi Tuesday, November 26, 2013***

Rashis covered: **Gn37-10**

Commonality: Both these verses describe *to whom* Joseph told his dreams.

Questions: After reviewing the two verses discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both phrases
- 2) What is difference in both phrases
- 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.

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- **Gn37-09** Joseph had another dream
- **Gn37-09** He told it to his *brothers*
- **Gn37-10** He told it to his *father and brothers*

This is what Rashi says:

- Joseph told over his dream twice
- First he told it to his brothers (who did not like it)
- Then he told it *again* to this brothers in their father's presence.

As in Gn37-07, Rashi here uses parallelism to justify a *twoness* in the act - he told the dream twice, once to this brothers and once to his brothers and father.

## **Reference - *Daily Rashi Wednesday Nov 27, 2013***

Rashis covered: **Gn37-23**

Today's Rashi illustrates learning grammar from parallelism.

Commonality: Both these verse phrases speak about Joseph's coat.

Questions: After reviewing the two words 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 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.

- **Gn37-23**
- *They took Joseph's coat* [Hebrew: *Ketoneth*]
- *They dipped the coat* [Hebrew: *Kutoneth*] *in blood*.

Before we explain Rashi, recall that in every language there are

- nouns, describing objects (e.g. *the shirt*)
- construct states of nouns, describing objects as properties (e.g. *the shirt of so and so*)

In

- English, the construct state is indicated by *of*
- Hebrew, the construct state is indicated by different vocalization.

Hence the Rashi comment

- *Kutoneth* is a noun
- *Ketoneth* is a noun in construct state.

## 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 (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

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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