

# The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on Bo*

## Vol 21#07 - Adapted from Rashi-is-Simple

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2013

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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 Wednesday Jan 1 2014*

Rashis covered: Ex10-01a

Commonality: The verse phrases below all speak about Moses warning Pharaoh on the plagues.

Questions: After reviewing the two 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.

- **Ex10-01** *God commanded Moses, Come to Pharaoh...let my people go*
- **Ex10-21** *God told Moses, swing your hand on the heavens bring darkness*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses speak about a plague God brought on the Egyptians
- 2) The two verses have different forms
  - In **Ex10-01** *God warns Pharaoh before the plague, Let my people go*
  - In **Ex10-21** there is no such warning; the plague is brought

Did you like this Rashi? The following is an excellent exercise for both adults and home schoolers

- Go to each of the 10 plagues
- Jot down the verb God uses to tell Moses to visit Pharaoh (sometimes there is no verb)
- Jot down whether Moses gave a speech *before the plague* ordering Pharaoh to let the Jews go.

You will find that specific verbs are used with specific warning types. This beautiful

extension of Rashi is due to the master of pedagogy, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. Hirsch cleverly shows that

- Plagues 1,4,7 use the phrase "Go to Pharaoh" and gives warnings
- Plagues 2,5,8 use the phrase "Come to Pharaoh" and gives warnings
- Plagues 3,6,9 do not have an introductory phrase

Rav Hirsch further suggests that

- Plagues 3,6,9 were inflictions of pain (without request for repentance) and retaliate on the pain the Egyptians inflicted on the Jews
- Plagues 2,5,8 were plagues of humiliation and retaliate the slave-like treatment that the Egyptians inflicted on the Jews
- Plagues 1,4,7 were attacks on Egyptian pride, their land, water supply and airspace and retaliate the helplessness with which the Egyptians treated the Jews

All in all the first 9 plagues were responses to the famous Abrahamic vision in the treaty of cuts that **Gn15-13** "*Your descendants will be*

- *helpless*
- *enslaved*
- *tortured*

*The nation that does this will be judged and the Jews will leave with great wealth."*

As I indicated this is an excellent inquiry based study lesson for children and adults.

## **Reference - *Daily Rashi Thursday-Friday Jan 2,3 2013***

Rashis covered: Ex13-14b, Ex13-05d,

Background: This is the most famous of biblical parallel passages, the 4 sons, part of every Passover Seder.

Commonality: All verses speak about teaching children about the Exodus from Egypt.

Questions: After reviewing the three verses below discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in all three 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.

- **Ex12-26** When your children say to you: ...Tell them it is passover...
- **Ex13-08** ..... Tell your child....
- **Ex13-14** When you child asks you: what is this...tell him with a strong hand....
- **Dt06-20:21** When your child asks you, what are the laws...tell him we were slaves

Here are the answers to the questions.

- All four verses deal with communication to children about Egypt
- In two of the verses the child *asks* the question; in **Ex13-08** there is no asked question leading to the classification that **Ex13-08** is *the child who doesn't ask*
- Three of the verses use the singular, child, while one uses the plural, children. In two verses the child *asks* question while in the other verse the child *says* his question. This leads to classifying **Ex12-26** as *the cynical child* who belongs to street gangs (plural children) and challenges all ritual.

Homeschooling exercise: It is a wonderful exercise to cut out on paper the translations (no need to use Hebrew) of the chapters of the 4 sons and to ask a child (or an adult) to find the unique feature of each one. For further insights and further differences on this see my article, "The Four Sons" cited below.

**References**: Russell Jay Hendel, *The Educational Pedagogy of the Four Sons*, *Shofar*, Vol 22, #4, pp 94-106, 2004.

## **Reference - *Daily Rashi Saturday-Sunday Jan 4,5 2013***

Rashis covered: **Ex11-05a, Ex11-05b**

Background: Moses is warning Pharaoh about the 10th plague.

Commonality: Both verses speak about the 10th plague, the killing of the firstborn.

Questions: After reviewing the three verses below discuss the following

- 1) What is the same in both 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.

Homeschooling exercise: Ask your children (or co-adults) to look at **Ex11-05** and **Ex12-29**. Ask them to identify what is the same and what is different.

*All firstborn in Egypt will die*

- **Ex11-05** a) *Pharoh's firstborn*, b) *slaves firstborn*, c) *animal firstborn*
- **Ex12-29** a) *Phaorh's firstborn*, b) *prisoner firstborn*, c) *animal firstborn*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- Both verses mention death of the firstborn of a) Pharoh and c) animals
- The verses differ in that one mentions firstborn of slaves and one mentions firstborn of prisoners.

Rashi: *The verse clearly states that all firstborn will die. Hence the firstborn of Pharoh, of slaves, or prisoners, and of animals will all die.*

To fully understand Rashi recall the famous *Lechah Dodi* sonnet: *Shamor and Zachor were said together*. Rabbi Yehuda Levi, the great medieval poet was speaking about the parallelism in the two Decalogues, the Exodus Decalogue which states *Zachor, commemorate* the Sabbath while the Deuteronomic Decalogue states *Shamor, guard* the Sabbath. Jewish law in fact states that all people must do both on Sabbath: i) They must commemorate the Sabbath with good wine and ii) they must guard the Sabbath by abstaining from weekday activities.

Here too Rashi is stating that both verses - the death of the slaves and the death of prisoners - happened at the 10th plague.

Comment: Why then is each phrase assigned a separate place. The ambitious student should try and reconstruct the reason.

- In **Ex11** Moses is explaining that God is punishing the Egyptians for enslaving the Jews. But then the Egyptian slaves also enslaved the Jews; the Jews were slaves to slaves.
- In **Ex12** God is asserting his supremacy over Egypt. But then Pharoh who denied

God and the prisoners who would say that their gods overthrew Egypt so that they could go free are mentioned.

Rashi actually says the above *Why were the prisoners punished? Because they would claim their god defeated Egypt. Why were the Egyptian slaves punished? Because they enslaved the Jews.*

What I have added to Rashi is that Rashi is explaining the positioning of *prisoners/slaves* in the **Ex11** vs. the **Ex12** text. It is interesting that modern biblical scholarship attempts to explain differences in texts based on the situations and background of each text. Such an approach is useful to the traditionalists. (The only difference is that the traditionalists believe that the entire Bible was finalized by Moses during the 40 year sojourn.)

## 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