

# The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on BeShaLaCh*

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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 Wednesday Jan 8 2014*

Rashis covered: Ex15-06b

This weeks issue is devoted to poetic parallelism. It is also devoted to illustrations of parallelism as explained by Kugel: According to Kugel a parallel passage of the form *A,B* should be interpreted in such a way that the *B* passage builds and extends on the *A* passage. Kugel explains this principle in his book on parallelism. We have arranged the Rashis in an increasing set of three Rashis each with more challenge. Kugel's ideas may be found in the following book.

**Reference:** James L Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981.

Commonality: The verse phrases below all speak about about the greatness of God's hand.

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.

- Ex15-06 *Your right hand, O God, is adorned in strength*
- Ex15-06 *Your right hand, O God, pulverizes the enemy*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses speak about the greatness of God's hand
- 2) But the 2nd verse phrase expands on the first verse phrase
  - God's right hand is not just an ordinary strong hand
  - But a strong hand that can pulverize the enemy

Homeschooling exercise: The following is an excellent exercise for homeschooled children as well as for adults.

- Ask the child what is the same in both verses (This can be particularly easy since the sameness is indicated by a repeating phrase)
- Then ask the child what is increased and added in the second verse. (This is also easy since the added attribute is explicitly mentioned.)

Rashi actually gives about half a dozen verses where this parallel form is used. These verses can also be used as a basis for further homeschooling exercises.

## **Reference - *Daily Rashi Thursday-Friday Jan 9,10 2013***

Rashis covered: Ex15-02c, Ex15-02d

Commonality: The verse phrases below all speak about how we extol God.

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.

- **Ex15-02** *This is my God, and I will describe how nice he is*
- **Ex15-06** [*This is*] *the God of my Father, and I will deeply praise him*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses speak about how we, the Jews, extol God
- 2) But the 2nd verse phrase contrastively expands on the first verse phrase
  - He is not just God
  - He is also the God my fathers worshipped
- 3) This has the following consequences
  - If He is just God the most I can do is explain how nice he is. However, there is no depth here since God's niceness is based on a *one-time* experience in Egypt

- But if He is also the God of my fathers, then I can do more than say how nice he is. I can also deeply praise him; just as He is nice to me so He has been nice to my fathers. The niceness is then perceived as something persistent and periodic and hence we use the word *deeply praise* to indicate depth.

Homeschooling exercise: The following is an excellent exercise for homeschooled children as well as for adults.

- Ask the child what is the same in both verses (This can be particularly easy since the sameness is indicated by a repeating word, *God*)
- Then ask the child what is increased and added in the second verse.
  - The first part of this is easy since *God* is changed to *God of Fathers*
  - The second half is challenging; why does *God of fathers* add depth over *nice*. Some children may find it hard to articulate this.

Comment: The astute reader may have noticed that I have translated the Hebrew *VaaRommemenhu* as *deeply praise* him. But *Rom* means *high*. Why then did I translate it as *deep*?

Basically, we are speaking and searching for synonyms for *praise*. The word *anvayhu* occurring earlier in the verse refers to a *nice field* and hence to praise the tranquillity and nicety of something. But a field has no depth. *Rom* adds the vertical dimension. True *rom* itself means *elevate* but the point is to add the dimension of depth; therefore the closest English idiom is *deeply praise*. There is an English word *extol* but it is biblical in flavor not modern. The closest idiom in English to praise with depth is *deeply praise*.

## **Reference - *Daily Rashi Saturday-Sunday Jan 11,12 2013***

Rashis covered: **Ex15-03a, Ex15-03b**

Commonality: The verse phrases below all speak about about the greatness of God.

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.

- **Ex15-03** *God, He is a warrior*
- **Ex15-06** [but] *God is His name*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) Both verses speak about the greatness of God
- 2) But the 2nd verse phrase contrastively expands on the first verse phrase
  - Despite the fact that God is a warrior
  - He is nevertheless known as God (generally); in other words he does many things (not just fight wars)

Homeschooling exercise: The following is an excellent exercise for homeschooled children as well as for adults.

- Ask the child what is the same in both verses (This can be particularly easy since the sameness is indicated by a repeating word, *God*)
- Then ask the child what is increased and added in the second verse. This can be more challenging since what is added is not explicit. The child has to understand that God isn't just known for wars, He is known for many things.

Comment: Rashi literally says the following: *God is not like other kings who fight and can't devote their attention to anything else. Contrastively, God when he fights devotes himself to sustaining the world.*

So

- Rashi interprets the verse as a contrast between
  - *exclusively warrior* vs.
  - *warrior and nourisher.*
- We have interpreted the verse as
  - *warrior* vs.
  - *many things.*

Why have we broadened Rashi's more restrictive explanation? Because Rashi's explanation is based on the verse parallelism and parallelism always indicates general expansion. We therefore feel that Rashi simply gave *a strong good example* - God nourishes the world ó but we don't think Rashi would object to generally

saying - God does everything and is not just known as a warrior.

This is an important approach to reading Rashi.

## 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