

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on Shemini
Vol 21#16 - 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.

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Database - *Daily Rashi* Thur Mar 20, 2014

The examples today are more illustrative of database inquiries than pure parallelism. Today's first Rashi comes from reader inquiries. Someone asked if I respond to requests. Yes, I do: Simply email your Rashi inquiry to me at Rashiyomi@GMail.Com.

Rashis covered: Lv10-03b

Commonality: The verses below are biblical paragraph opening statements

Questions: After reviewing the 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)

Homeschooling exercise: Have you or your child review the two verses below. What is different in them? Seeing the difference should be easy; explaining it should be difficult.

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.

- Lv05-14 *God cited to Moses to say over;*
- Lv05-20 *God cited to Moses to say over;*
- Lv06-01 *God cited to Moses to say over;*
- Lv07-22 *God cited to Moses to say over;*
- Lv10-08 *God cited to Aaron to say over;*

Here are the answers to the questions.

- 1) All verses introduce biblical paragraph
- 2) A typical introduction is *cited to Moses*; contrastively, Lv06-02 says *cited to Aaron*.

In explaining this verse there are several unusual features to the Rashi comment:

First: Rashi does not comment on **Lv10-08**, the verse with the anomaly. Instead Rashi comments on **Lv10-03b**, the verse which states that Aaron silently accepted the death of his sons who, under intoxication, entered the Temple and offered an inappropriate sacrifice: *In the merit that Aaron silently accepted the death of his sons for violating Temple sanctity, he merited that the paragraph beginning Lv10-08 which discusses the prohibition of priests serving the Temple while intoxicated, was stated to him rather, than as usual to Moses.*

Second: Most students of Rashi including many modern scholars are unaware that Rashi as well as many Talmudic sages used the equivalent of what is known today as **Database** methods. The Database method is similar to the **parallelism** method in that it reviews several verses with almost identical structure with a few, possibly one, verse anomalous. The driving force of the exegesis is the contrast of the one anomaly to the typical pattern.

Most importantly, a Database Rashi can only be understood against a background of many many similar verses.

Today anyone can press a button on a search engine and view comparisons in order to find out what is anomalous and what is not. People are unaware that the Talmudic sages frequently used Database methods. A modern database inquiry shows for example in the Bible

- 70 occurrences of *God cite to Moses to say over*
- 1 occurrence of *God cite to Aaron to say over*
- 10 occurrences of *God cite to Moses and Aaron to say over*

There are two frequently used words for communication: *say* and *cite*. Similar type statistics exist for both the verses of the form *God said to Moses to say over*. By the way, this is an excellent exercise for children using modern search engines.

The **Database** inquiry shows why Rashi commented on **Lv10-08**: It is a one time anomaly against 70 typical occurrences.

Some more comments are appropriate:

- The Malbim on another verse **Lv01-01** gives an exhaustive analysis of these verses using the methods just described.
- We reiterate: Rashi appears homiletic - Rashi seems to be overly emphasizing that *God cited to Aaron to say over*; Not so! Rashi is not commenting on one

word; rather Rashi is focusing on the contrastive difference of 6 dozen verses where God speaks to Moses with one verse where God speaks to Aaron. Seen in this way, Rashi appears deep and profound instead of shallow and homiletic

- Rashi also appears to be commenting on the verse *Aaron was silent* [at the death of his children]. Not so: The driving force of Rashi is not the emotional awe at Aaron silently accepting the death of his children; the driving force of Rashi is the database anomaly which occurs a few verses later; this database anomaly described above justifies seeing Aaron's silence as the reason for the exclusive citation to Aaron. Here again: Rashi appears profound and deep; not shallow and exhaustive

Formatting - Daily Rashi Fri Mar 21, 2014

Rashis covered: Lv10-02a

This Rashi continues the Rashi discussed yesterday, Mar 20, 2014. The Rashi on **Lv10-02a** is not really suited to homeschooling. Rashi deals with the question, *Why did Aaron's children sin? Why should they have so stupidly gone into the Temple to offer an offering prohibited?*

Such a question is answered by a Rashi method we have not yet discussed: The Rashi **formatting** method: The Bible can indicate nuances through juxtapositions. That is, through the fact that diverse themes are mentioned together in a biblical paragraph or in consecutive paragraphs.

Rashi cites two opinions on why the sons of Aaron entered the Temple and offered an inappropriate sacrifice

- They were drunk.

This explanation is inferred by the juxtaposition of the prohibition of priests serving drunk immediately after the death of Aaron's sons due to intoxication. Such a juxtaposition is not a matter of logic or database anomaly but rather something subjective and illusive; the understanding of such Rashis requires adult emotions and hence this Rashi is not suitable for homeschooling.

- Aaron's two sons decided a matter of Jewish law without consulting their parents.

This explanation *complements* the first view, that they were drunk. It answers the question of *how*. How did drunkenness lead to entering the Temple? This view explains that while drunk the sons said *If our father can offer incense then so can we*. Again we have an appeal to adult emotions. Such an approach makes

Rashi deep and profound.

- Rashi omits other explanations which however are found in the Midrash. Again Rashi did not omit these explanations because of rejection of them but rather Rashi cited the fundamental explanation of drunkenness leaving the reader to supplement the Rashi with further complementary explanations. In this regard, we cite the Midrashic explanation that they died because they were confirmed bachelors and didn't think any woman was good enough for them. Again, we can tie this explanation into the other explanations as follows:

Let us enumerate the 3 explanations we have so far

- They were drunk
- No woman was good enough for them
- They could do whatever anyone else could do (e.g. enter the Temple)

The above bullets present a model of the bachelor life: Drunkenness, a drowning of personal problems in illusions, a refusal to recognize superiors and a refusal to enter into a relationship where commitment is required.

We believe this Rashi explanation illustrative. The Rashi method used here, is based on nuance, adult emotions, and unifying archetypes such as the *drunk* archetype.

Database - *Daily Rashi Saturday Mar 22, 2014*

Today's Rashi is the most beautiful illustration of the Talmudic mind, the **Database** mind. The Rashi is derived from an ancient Midrashic compilation, the Sifrey, and is attributed to Rabbi Ishmael.

Rashis covered: Lv11-45a

Commonality: The verses below describe commandments done to commemorate the Exodus.

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)

Homeschooling exercise: Have you or your child review on the two verses below.

What is different in them? Using the meaning of the verse explain the difference. (This should be an easy exercise even for children: indeed, the difference is underlined).

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.

- **Nu15-41** observe Tzitzith (fringes on your garments) I am the God who took you from Egypt
- **Dt13-06** execute false prophets....I am the God who took you from Egypt
- **Lv25-38** do not use incorrect measuring devices...I am the God who took you from Egypt
- **Lv11-45** do not eat non-kosher foods ...I am the God who elevated you from Egypt

Here are the answers to the questions.

1) All verses justify a commandment with the phrase I am the God who took you from Egypt

2) However, **Lv11-45** uses the anomalous phrase I am the God who elevated you from Egypt

Rashi explains: *The reason **Lv11-45** uses elevate rather than take you from is because the essence of Egypt was spiritual uncleanness which is conferred by for example non-kosher animals. Therefore this verse emphasizes that God elevated us from the spiritual uncleanness.*

Comment: The Rashi is remarkable because only about a dozen of the 613 commandments use the justifying phrase I am the God who took you from Egypt. Among these dozen anomalies only one uses the phrase elevates you from Egypt. So this Rashi uses a nested **Database** approach, hence it is my favorite. Egypt used a collection of spiritually unclean practices such as bad measuring devices, false prophets etc. The goal behind all these practices was to demoralize and destroy the spirit. However, at the crux of Egyptian sorcery, the use of certain unclean animals to destroy the spirit, the Bible uses the all important term, elevation, signifying that God elevated us from Egyptian spiritual uncleanness. The other verses mentioning Egypt, mention derived practices that demoralize while this verse mentions the key Egyptian practice, the use of unclean animals.

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 R0ASHI 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 (Honyms)** 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