

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis on Balak
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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 have studied parallelism for about a year now. We are trying a new format: We are covering all Rashi rules and giving brief explanations.

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.

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Daily Rashi Grammar Nu22-11a,b Thu Jul 3- 12

Rashis covered: Nu22-11a,b

Today's issue is my oldest Rashi,; it was done while I was in High School. This Rashi illustrates the fundamental parallelism method (references are below). An exciting aspect of today's Rashi is that we get to see Rashi use the workbook approach: There are 10 issues to resolve but Rashi resolves only two of them. He

leaves the other 8 issues for us to resolve. These 8 exercises are good for both children in home schooling, for adults, and even for rabbinical scholars. Thus while we only cover 2 Rashis today there are really 10 Rashis the other 8 Rashis being Rashi-like and supplied by us. We will present today's issue in a series of exercises and Tables.

Biblical Text: **Exercise #1:** Compare Nu22:05-06 and Nu22-11. Find all differences

- In King Balak's original request
- Bilam's summary of that request to curse the Jewish people.

The solution to this Exercise is found in Table 1 below.

Notice in the table that there are

- 10 differences
- But Rashi only comments on two of them

Exercise #2: Using the 2 comments of Rashi explain the 8 other differences in the table using the same Rashi concepts.

Just to clarify: Rashi said that

- King Balak was motivated by *territorial security* - he wanted Israel out of his back yard
- Bilam was motivated by *hatred* - he wanted Israel destroyed.

Thus the first Rashi theme is: *Territorial Security vs hatred*

The second Rashi theme is *stronger* language since

- King Balak used the softer term, *curse*
- Bilam used the stronger term *damn*.

The solution to the exercise - using the concepts of *stronger* and *territorial vs. hatred* - is presented in Table 2. Remember, this is not Rashi's solution but my solution. The greatest understanding of Rashi is when you can both receive and give - you apply methods and give a Rashi on a text the same way Rashi does.

Nu 22:5-6 King Balak's request	Nu22-11 Bilam's summary of Balak's request	Rashi: Actual
Behold <u>a</u> nation	Behold <u>the</u> nation	
that <u>went out</u> of Egypt	that is <u>going out</u> of Egypt	
<u>Behold</u>		
It <u>covered</u> the land	It <u>is covering</u> the land	
<u>He sits opposite me</u>		
Now <u>please</u> go	Now go	
<u>Curse</u> this nation for me	<u>Damn</u> them	<i>Damn is a stronger term than curse</i>
<u>For it is bigger than me</u>		
Perhaps I can <u>smite</u> it	Perhaps I can <u>war</u> with it	
And banish it <u>from the land</u>	And banish it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balak was a King and just wanted territorial security – <i>banish Israel from my land.</i> Contrastively, Bilam hated the Jews and wanted them banished period – that is destroyed

Table 1: Differences between Nu22:05-06 and Nu22-11. Rashi explains two of the comments. You read the columns vertically - so Nu22:05-06 is read down column 1, and Nu22-11 is read down column 2. Differences between the two columns are indicated with bold-italics-underline.

Nu 22:5-6 King Balak's request	Nu22-11 Bilam's summary of Balak's request	Rashi: Actual	Rashi-ing the Text
Behold <u>a</u> nation	Behold <u>the</u> nation		<i>The</i> is a stronger term than <i>a</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balak: "A" nation – no hatred; just didn't want them in back yard Bilam: "The" nation: Motivation was hatred
that <u>went out</u> of Egypt	that is <u>going out</u> of Egypt		<i>Present</i> tense (going out) is a stronger term than past tense (<i>went out</i>)
<u>Behold</u>			<i>Behold</i> – an interjection and an emotional stronger term. Intensity of emotion is indicative of hatred
It <u>covered</u> the land	It <u>is covering</u> the land		<i>Present</i> tense (covered) is a stronger term than past tense (<i>it is covering</i>)
<u>He sits opposite me</u>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balak: Concerned with territorial security (no hatred of people per se) Bilam: Motivated by hatred- no need for reason
Now <u>please</u> go	Now go		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balak: Polite – uses <i>please</i> Bilam: Filled with hatred – no use of <i>please</i>
<u>Curse</u> this nation for me	<u>Damn</u> them	<i>Damn</i> is a stronger term than <i>curse</i>	
<u>For it is bigger than me</u>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balak: Concerned with territorial security (no hatred of people per se) Gives reason for request. Bilam: Filled with hatred – no need to give rational reason.
Perhaps I can <u>smite</u> it	Perhaps I can <u>war</u> with it		<i>War</i> is a stronger term than <i>smite</i>
And banish it <u>from the land</u>	And banish it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balak was a King and just wanted territorial security – <i>banish Israel from my land.</i> Contrastively, Bilam hated the Jews and wanted them banished period – that is destroyed 	

Table 2: Explanation of all 10 differences using the two Rashi concepts of *stronger* and *territorial vs. hatred*. The explanations in the 4th column are Rashi-like comments supplied by the reader.

References:

James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History*, John Hopkins Press, 1981

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 (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

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