

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on Ki ThaVoH*

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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.*

*The most frequent questions I receive about the Daily Newsletter are the following.*

- *What do the classical commentators on Rashi say about his reasons?*
- *If they say such and such what are you adding?*
- *If they don't say what you say, why are you saying it?*

*So the next year, or perhaps more, will be devoted to citing Rashi commentators and explaining how the methods of the Newsletter sharpen and crystallize them. We will be citing mostly from the 4-6 classical Rashi commentators: Sifsay Chachamin, Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, and Chizkuni. We will occasionally add insights of Rav Hirsch and Malbim.*

*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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**Meaning Climax *Daily Rashi* Thur-Fri 9/11-12/14 Dt28-56a:57a**

**Background:** The Bible is describing the curses that will befall the Jewish people if they violate God's law.

**Biblical text:** Dt28-55:58 The dainty woman will cast a bad eye

- on her husband
  - on her [grown] children
  - on her placentas, those who go out between her legs [small children]
- since she will eat them stealthily because she lacks anything

**Rashi Text:**

- *on her children* - the grown children
- *on her placentas, those who go out from between her legs* - small children

**Mizrachi:** The phrase *on her children* means *grown* children since the phrase after it *those who go out from between her legs* means small children.

**Rashi Newsletter:** We have added to the Mizrachi the *classification*; Rashi is deriving meaning from the **climax** principle. That is repeated phrases, *children, between her legs*, should be nuanced as climactic - *grown children and even infants*.

The Rashi newsletter emphasizes that the word *children* by itself does not mean grown children. Indeed *children* could mean young or old children. The driving force of the Rashi comment is the *fact of sequence* which is an independent method, independent from the **meaning** method, to derive meaning.

The Rashi Newsletter also contributes by

- i) *classifying* this Rashi using a known literary rule, **climax**, and also
- ii) presenting many similar examples where **climax** functions to give meanings.

Finally the Rashi Newsletter contributes by presenting secular scholars, such as David Kugel, who show that secular methods agree with the Rashi comments: The modern **parallelism** methods studied and brilliantly explained by Kugel are interpreted *children and even small children*. In other words, Kugel includes what the Rashi newsletter classifies as Rashi's **climax** method in the **parallelism** method.

**References:**

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

**Paragraph Climax *Daily Rashi* Dt24-06a,b Sat 9/13/14**

**Background:** The Bible is discussing the curses brought on the Jewish people if they don't listen to God's commandments.

**Biblical text:**

**Dt28-68a**

- *God will return you to Egypt by boat [as transported captives]*
- *by the path that I [God] said you will not again see*
- *and you will attempt to sell yourselves as slaves, but there will be no buyers*

**Rashi Text:**

*God will return you to Egypt by boat as transported captives*

**Mizrachi:** Rashi added the word captives, *by boat as transported captives*, since otherwise (without the word *captives*) there is no curse (because the verse simply says *you will return to Egypt by boat*)

**Sifsay Chachamim:** Sifsay chachamim brings 4 explanations of the Rashi comment *as transported captives*.

- [Raam] Without the phrase *as transported captives* there is no curse since it simply says *you will return to Egypt*
- [Sifsay Chachamim] Returning to Egypt by boat instead of foot is more of a curse since the opportunity to commit suicide (jump from boat) is possible as happened with the 400 children captives who committed suicide from a boat.
- [Imray Noam] Boat transport vs. foot transport is harsher since foot transport is not possible for children or disabled adults while boat transport allows children and disabled adults to be transported also.
- [Ri] The word *boat* echoes the 2nd bullet *in the path that I [God] said you will not again see*. In other words, even though God is bound by his word, He can still curse you. For example, God said *You will not go back to Egypt by path* but God allows going back by *boat*.

**Rashi Newsletter:** Rashi employs the principle of paragraph unity and **climax**. According to the Kugel criteria for parallel passages, each of the three phrases must add something to the previous phrase and not just repeat it. Using this principle, Kugel was able to defend many obscure Midrashim of Chazal. Another point of Kugel, emphasized by the Rashi newsletter, is that the fact of three phrases, *in and of itself without further justification such as superfluous or strange words*, justifies the reinterpretation in a climactic manner.

Here is the re-interpretation of the three passages using **climax**:

- *God will return you to Egypt by boat, as transported captives*, [captives reflects the unifying paragraph theme of captivity]
- *by the path that I [God] said you will not again see*, [the Biblical prophecies of Israel's choseness and superiority and exodus from enslaving Egypt, will not help you since I (God) will fulfill them and still punish you]
- *and you will attempt to sell yourselves as slaves, but there will be no buyers* [you will be sold as captives but no one will buy you (and you will have to die by starvation and thirst)]

Here is a terser summary and recap:

- captive slaves,
- no longer protected by biblical prophecies
- dying from hunger, not from captivity, since no one will buy you.

As you can see, the three phrases illustrate climax: slaves, slaves without God's protection, slaves that are rejected.

**Summary:** Notice how the Rashi Newsletter approach integrates several points in the other Rashi commentators:

- All agree that the *boat transport* indicates a curse (We can add that the *boat* transport adds nuances of possible suicide and transport of disabled)
- We cite the Ri cited by the Sifsay Chachamim to explain the 2nd biblical phrase - *God will keep all His prophecies but still transport you*
- The last phrase indicates over and above the slave captivity the Jews will die of hunger because no one will buy them (See Imray Noam above; the fact that no one will buy the slaves is a consequence of transport of disabled people)

## **Grammar *Daily Rashi* Dt28-61a Ex19-18a 9/14-15/14**

**Background:** The Bible is discussing the curses brought on the Jewish people if they don't listen to God's commandments.

### **Biblical text:**

**Dt28-61** *Also, every sickness and disease not mentioned in this Bible, God will raise them on you*

### **Rashi Text:**

The biblical text uses a word with the 4 letters **yud-ayin-lamed-mem**.

Approach #1: The biblical root is **ayin-lamed-hey** *God will raise*

- the prefix **yud** indicates the future *God will raise*
- **ayin-lamed** is the root (*God will raise*) and
- the suffix **mem** indicates the object: *God will raise them*

Approach #2: The biblical root is **ayin-lamed-mem** *God will hide*

- the prefix **yud** indicates the future *God will hide*
- **ayin-lamed-mem** is the root (*God will hide*)

**Gur Aryeh**: He notes the above two approaches, cites the Ibn Ezra (who apparently differs from Rashi) and say that Rashi disagrees

**Sifsay Chachamim/Mizrachi**: They first attempt to distinguish between the two possible interpretations - **ayin-lamed** vs **ayin-lamed-mem** - by examining the punctuation of the **ayin**. This does not work.

They then ingeniously point out that the second approach is missing a bullet for the suffix **mem** indicating an object, *God will hide them*. So if the true biblical root is **ayin-lamed-mem** then the biblical text should have been **yud-ayin-lamed-mem-mem**, *yaaleemem*. This proves that the second interpretation is wrong and the first, emphasizing the root **ayin-lamed-hey**, is correct.

**Rashi Newsletter**: The Rashi newsletter agrees with the Rashi commentators that Rashi uses the **grammar** rule. However, the Rashi newsletter adds the novelty that many of Rashi's grammatical explanations focus on choices between two almost identical interpretations. Here is another example.

**Biblical Text**: Ex19-18a *Mount Sinai was all smoking*

**Rashi text**:

- The Hebrew word, **QShon**, refers to a noun, *smoke*
- The Hebrew word, **AShon**, refers to a verb, *smoking*.

Since the verse uses the word **AShon**, therefore the proper translation is *smoking*.

## 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 (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

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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

