

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on NiTzaViM-VaYeyLach*

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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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**Paragraph Format *Daily Rashi* Thur 9/18/14 Dt29-15a**

**Background:** Moses in his fairwell speech swears the Jewish people to observe the law. The Bible then describes the curses that will befall the Jewish people if they violate God's law.

## **Biblical Text: Dt29-15:20**

- **For you know**

*how we have lived in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which you passed by;*

- **And you have seen**

*their abominations, and their idols,*

- *wood and stone,*

- *silver and gold, which were among them;*

➤ **[Consequently] Maybe** there is amongst you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations;

➤ **[Consequently] maybe** there should be among you a root that bears gall and worm wood;

➤ And it should come to pass, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst;

❖ **The Lord will not spare him**, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

❖ **And the Lord shall mark him off** for evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the Torah;

## **Rashi Text: Dt29-15a**

**(Mizrachi / Gur Aryeh / Sifsay Chachamim)** Rashi indicates the formatting and structure of the paragraph of verses. The **Rashi Newsletter** clarifies this insight by actually formatting the verses to reflect the Rashi comment. The Rashi Newsletter also clarifies by explicitly pointing out that many Rashis have their root in formatting and provides other examples.

We have underlined and given bigger font to the verse citations above. If one just reads the big font verses one hears Rashi's comment

- You have seen (Egypt and nations)
- You know (their idolatrous practices)

- So if you know this consequently maybe you have doubts and want to worship idols

Rashi's point is that the first two verses - you have seen Egypt, the nations and their practices, is background for the 3rd verse which describes the doubts you may have. As Rashi says, "Because you have seen this idolatry and have doubts, that is the reason I (Moses) have to swear you into the covenant to worship God."

Interestingly, the Rashi commentators advocate adding to the text a connecting **Vav** (which we have translated as *consequently*) to emphasize the Rashi point. The Rashi Newsletter also advocates adding parenthetical inserts to make verse connections clearer.

## **Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Fri 9/19/14 Dt29-16c**

### **Biblical Text: Dt29-16c**

*You have seen their abominations, and their idols,*

- *wood and stone,*
- *silver and gold, which are amongst them:*

**Rashi text:** Notice the **parallel** phrases and notice the extra underlined phrase. Why the extra underlined phrase?

- Because the wood and stone idols are visible in public and can be seen while
- the silver and gold idols are hidden (amongst them) because idolaters worry about them being stolen.

**Rashi Newsletter:** We have illustrated the verse parallelism using the bulleted structure.

**Rashi commentators:** One of the Rashi commentators argues that the verse should be bulleted this way

- You have seen their abominations and idols, wood and stone
- silver and gold which are amongst them

The argument is that *they can only see the wood and stone, they cannot see the silver and gold which are hidden, consequently the introductory phrase you have seen only applies to wood and stone.*

I would argue the above bulleting would not make sense (there is no verb in the

second bullet). Also *abominations and idols* refer to both classes, *wood and stone* as well as *silver and gold*.

I would therefore argue that the verb *see* in *You have seen* refers to awareness. Combining all comments I would translate and format the verse this way:

*You have become aware of their abominations, and their idols,*

- *wood and stone,*
- *silver and gold, which are amongst them;*

To clinch my argument I would bring the case of Laban whose idols were stolen by his daughter (who knew where he kept them). The point here is that there was socialization with non-jews and they therefore got to see what was in their houses.

## References:

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

## Meaning Hononyms *Daily Rashi* Sat 9/20/14 Dt29-17b

**Background:** God is warning the Jewish people to keep the covenant and not stray after the idols.

### **Biblical text: Dt29-17b**

[Consequently] Maybe there is amongst you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations;

**Rashi text:** The Hebrew word should be translated as *maybe*.

**Rashi commentators:** They cite other verses with the same Hebrew word which is translated at *lest* or *don't*. The **Rashi Newsletter** adds the linguistic observation

- A verse beginning *watch yourselves* followed by the Hebrew word *pen* should be translated: *watch yourselves and do not do such and such*
- A verse not having the phrase *watch yourself* with the Hebrew word *pen* should be translated as *maybe*.

Here are some sample verses:

- **Dt06-12** Watch yourselves: Do not forget God
- **Dt09-28** Remember (Zechor) the patriarches, annul Your decreee, do not let

Egypt say 'God couldn't deliver them

- **Dt12-13** Watch yourselves: Do not offer elevation offerings wherever you feel like

## **Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Sun 9/21/14 Dt29-17c**

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

### **Biblical text: Dt29-17c**

- *You are standing today before God Your Lord...to enter into covenant*
- ....
- *Maybe there is among you someone whose heart turns astray today from God*

**Rashi Text combined with Rashi commentators:** The underlined words *today* link the two verses. Since I worry that *today* someone may have doubts and want to worship idols, therefore, *today*, I stand you before God to create a covenant not to worship these idols.

**Rashi NewsLetter:** We have used parallel structure with underlines (as shown above) to highlight the contrastive nature of these two verses. The structure helps emphasize the Rashi comment.

## **References:**

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

## **Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Mon 9/21/14 Dt29-18a**

**Background:** The bible is discussing the thoughts of someone who wishes to go astray after idolatry, ignore the biblical curses and thinks all will be OK if he worships idols.

### **Biblical text: Dt29-18a**

Maybe someone amongst you thinks about turning against God to worship idols...and calms himself when

- he hears the curses that will come as follows:
- I will have peace.

**Rashi text:** Peace means the blessing of peace [e.g. The priestly blessing]

**Rashi commentators (Mizrachi/ Sifsay Chachamim / Gur Aryeh):**

Obviously the person who wishes to stray thinks he will avoid the curses. But why does that imply peace? Rashi's point therefore is that *in addition* to avoiding the curses the person worshipping the idols thinks he will have the Divine blessing of peace (such as the Priestly blessing). In other words, the person thinks his idols give him a connection with the Divine so that he has the peace of God on him.

**Rashi Newsletter** adds the parallel structure as shown above. We might add that Dr Kugel (reference below) has significantly increased our understanding of Midrashic meaning by pointing out that all parallel verses imply climax. The second half is not repeating the first half but adding to it. This addition emphasizes and expands on the first verse-half: *Not only will I avoid curses but I will additionally achieve peaceful serenity with God.*

**References:**

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

**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*

**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)

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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