

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

*Their presence in Rashis on VaMiKeTz*

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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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*Hi. Welcome to another year of Rashiyomi. In addition to presenting the classical Rashi commentators, we will emphasize my unique contribution to the biblical understanding of Genesis, namely, that Genesis is a book about prophecy. Genesis is not about history and is not about cosmology. It is about the creation of prophecy and the*

*contribution of the prophets to human history.*

**Daily Rashi Thursday-Monday 12/4-8/2014 Gn32-04a**

*In this week's issue we deviate from our usual format by doing one Rashi in complete depth*

- *Thursday We present the Rashi*
- *Friday We present the Midrash on which the Rashi is based*
- *Saturday We show how the Rashi commentators correct Rashi*
- *Sunday We suggest further corrections to the Rashi/Midrash*
- *Monday We suggest a new explanation to the Rashi*

**Database-Grammar Daily Rashi Thursday 12/18/2014 Gn44-08a**

**Today we study the Rashi text itself.**

**Biblical Text: Gn44-08a**

- Behold
- *The money found in our luggage we returned to you from Canaan*
- Therefore, how then
- *Could we have stolen from the house of our master silver or gold.*

**Rashi Text:** *This text is one of the 10 fortioris found in the Torah.*

**Comment:** Just to clarify the Rashi, we explain the term *fortiori*.

- The brothers had been accused of a moral crime, theft
- The brothers defend themselves by showing abstention from another moral crime, *not returned a lost article* (The

argument being that they did return the lost article)

- But how does the *return of a lost article* justify *no theft*.
- The justification is called a fortiori. If a *lesser* crime was not committed, *not returning a lost article*, how much more so that a *higher* crime was not committed, *theft*.

The key driver for the fortiori is the contrasting of a *lesser* and *more serious* case. We will see this in the dozen or so fortiori's brought this week. Throughout the digest we will use the terms *lesser and more serious*. (Sometimes the *more serious* clause is called the *major* argument).

## **Database-Grammar *Daily Rashi* Friday 12/19/2014 Gn44-08a**

### **Today we study the Midrash on which the Rashi is based**

Very often, a Rashi comment, although logically justifiable, is based on a similar comment made by the many midrashic compilations. In this case, Rashi based his comment on the **Great Genesis Midrash (Midrash Rabbah)** a very popular Midrashic source which Rashi frequently uses. The comment Rashi made is found in Chapter 92 paragraph 7. It states as follows.

*The school of Rabbi Ishmael taught: This verse is one of the 10 fortiori's found in the bible.*

Verse	Hebrew Keyword	English Keyword	Verse text	English Keyword	Biblical text	ID
	2	1		2		

<b>Ez14-05</b>	<i>Af</i>	Behold	When the vine is perfect it is not used for utensil	Certainly	After a fire eats it and it is burnt	1
<b>Nu12-14</b>	<i>Hloh</i>		Her father spit in her face <i>would not</i> she be embarrassed for 7 days		Let her stay outside the camp (embarrassed) for seven days	2
<b>Es09-12</b>	<i>Mah</i>		In the Shushan capital the Jews killed 500 and hung Hamans 10 sons	How much	they did in other provinces	3
<b>Dt31-27</b>	<i>Vaf</i>	Behold	While I am alive with you today, you are rebellious against God	And certainly	After my death	4
<b>Pr11-31</b>	<i>Vaf</i>	Behold	The righteous are rewarded in this world	And certainly	The wicked and sinners	5
<b>1S23-03</b>	<i>Vaf</i>	Behold	We are fearful here in Judah	And certainly	If we live amongst Philistines	6
<b>Gn44-08</b>	<i>Veych</i>	Behold	We returned from Canaan the money we found in our sacks	Then How	Could we steal from our master's house silver or gold	7
<b>Ex06-12</b>	<i>Veych</i>	Behold	The Jews have not listened to me	Then How	will pharoh listen to me	8
<b>Jr12-05</b>	<i>Veych</i>	If	When you run with foot runners you fatigue	Then How	Will you compete with horses	9
<b>Jr12-05</b>	<i>Veych</i>		[If you are fearful] In a peaceful land	Then How	[Will you fear] in the Jordan thicket	10

Let's make sure we understand this by reviewing one of the examples. We take ID #4. Moses argues with the Jewish people in his fairwell speech shortly prior to this death.

- *You the Jewish people have been rebellious against God right here while I have still been alive*
- *Certainly then, after my death you will be rebellious.*

The *lesser* clauses deals with Jews rebelling against God despite the presence of their prophet Moses. The *more serious* clause discusses the Jews rebellion after Moses' death.

**Tip for Homeschoolers:** I sometimes receive comments that some of my Rashi explanations are too complicated for homeschooling and small children. I have actually spent two years homeschooling children ages 5-13 and found no trouble with complex Rashis. The key to doing this is to break up into simple tasks.

For example, with this Midrash, one should not present the whole midrash. Rather one should take the 10 verse citations and ask the child to construct the above table. There are several subtleties in the above table which however children can do

- Examples 9 and 10 come from the same verse. Younger children sometimes just write down one example and think there are 9 cases when there are 10
- The Midrash does not emphasize the keywords. However if the child is shown some keywords in one example they usually can find the rest.

Both the Rashi and midrash left out the keywords. But as we will see in Monday's lesson, these keywords are the key to a new understanding of the Midrash and Rashi.

**Database-Grammar *Daily Rashi* Saturday 12/20/2014 Gn44-08a**

**Today we study the correction of the Rashi commentators to Rashi.**

**Rashi Commentators, Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay**

**Chachamim:** The Rashi text as well as the Midrashic text state

- These are one of the 10 fortiori's found in the Torah

- But the list of 10 fortiori's presented on Friday, shows citations from the entire Bible, not just the Torah. Consequently, we infer that Rashi and Midrash's use of the word *Torah* is not literal but broad.

**Comments:** Note several things about this emendation

- We can defend Rashi's use of the word *Torah*, by pointing out that Rashi simply copied the Midrash.
- The Rashi commentators introduce here a valid method of Rashi critique: We can correct a Rashi or midrashic text by interpreting a word broadly if the Midrashic text or the biblical verses cited justifies it.
- In Sunday's Daily Rashi we will bring other emendations to the Rashi and Midrashic text based on further biblical verses.

**Database-Grammar *Daily Rashi* Sunday 12/21/2014 Gn44-08a**

**Today we make further corrections to Rashi**

The Rashi and Midrash would have us believe that there are exactly 10 fortiori's in the Bible. But there are many more.

**Homeschooling tip:** Using the keywords in the Midrash table above find more examples. This can be accomplished by any child or adult who knows how to use a search engine.

**Example 1: 2S12-18**

Notice that examples 7,8,9,10 use the keywords *behold, then how*. The following verse also presents a fortiori based on the keywords *behold, then how*. This brings the number of biblical

fortioris to 11. The background for the following fortiori is that King David had committed adultery. The prophet Gad punished David by telling him that his child will die. King David was very upset. He fasted and sat in sackcloth. His servants tried to prevent him from fasting but the King did not listen. Then the child died. They were afraid to tell him 'The child died you can now eat' because they argued a fortiori that he would not listen to them.

- *Behold*
- *While the child was alive we spoke to King David but he didn't listen*
- *Then How*
- *Can we tell him the child is dead [he certainly will not listen to us and may harm himself]*

### **Example 2: Lv26-40**

Examples 4,5,6 in the above table use the keyword *and certainly*. The following verse also presents a fortiori using the word *certainly*. The background for this verse is the punishment the Jewish people will experience in exile. The verse states that after much punishment the Jews will confess their sins.

- *The Jews will confess their sins and their father's sins that they trespassed against me*
- *and certainly* [they will confess]
- *that they ignored the punishments and called them accidents* [instead of acts of God]

### **Example 3: Song 7:01-02**

Lets repeat the translation of the verse, example #3, **Es09-12**. I cite the Judaic Classics 3.4 translation. Similar (errors in) translations occur in sophisticated translations such as JPS.

*And the king said to Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the capital, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is your petition? and it shall be granted you; or what is your request further? and it shall be done.*

This verse does not even look like an a fortiori. To correct this example brought by the Midrash Rabbah, we recall that in Hebrew (like in English) the word *what* can also mean *wow* or *how much*. So we substitute the translation *how much* for the translation *what have they done*.

Apparently, the Midrash Rabbah translates this as follows  
*And the king said to Esther the queen,*

- *The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the capital, and the ten sons of Haman;*
- *How much more*
- *in the rest of the king's provinces?*

Now this is indeed a classic a fortiori. The *lesser* clause discusses killings in the capital. The *more serious* clause discusses killings in the less protected outer provinces.

We see from this that *how much more* is an a fortiori keyword. But then the following verse (symbolically admiring a woman's physical beauty) should also be an a fortiori (bringing to 13 the number of a fortioris).

- *Return, return, Shunamith; return return so we can gaze at you*



- *How much more so* [that we gaze at]
- *the beauty of your footsteps in sandals; of your hidden thighs which look like artisan jewels.*

**Summary:** We have brought 3 additional examples of a fortiori bringing to the total number of biblical a fortioris, at least 13.

In criticizing the Midrash Rabbah we have used the same techniques as the Rashi commentators; we have based our criticism verses using the same methods as the Midrash.

In Monday's Daily Rashi, we will interpret the Midrash in a new light which resolves everything.

## Database-Grammar *Daily Rashi* Monday 12/22/2014 Gn44-08a

### Today we reinterpret Rashi and the Midrash

First, let us bring back the Midrashic table of 10 fortioris. We have already *supplemented* the table with emphasis on keywords as shown below.

Verse	Hebrew Keyword 2	English Keyword 1	Verse text	English Keyword 2	Biblical text	ID
Ez14-05	<i>Af</i>	Behold	When the vine is perfect it is not used for utensil	Certainly	After a fire eats it and it is burnt	1
Nu12-14	<i>Hloh</i>		Her father spit in her face	Would not	She be embarrassed 7 days	2
Es09-12	<i>Mah</i>		In the Shushan capital the Jews killed 500 and hung Hamans 10 sons	How much	they did in other provinces	3

<b>Dt31-27</b>	<i>Vaf</i>	Behold	While I am alive with you today, you are rebellious against God	And certainly	After my death	4
<b>Pr11-31</b>	<i>Vaf</i>	Behold	The righteous are rewarded in this world	And certainly	The wicked and sinners	5
<b>1S23-03</b>	<i>Vaf</i>	Behold	We are fearful here in Judah	And certainly	If we live amongst Philistines	6
<b>Gn44-08</b>	<i>Veych</i>	Behold	We returned from Canaan the money we found in our sacks	Then How	Could we steal from our master's house silver or gold	7
<b>Ex06-12</b>	<i>Veych</i>	Behold	The Jews have not listened to me	Then How	will pharoh listen to me	8
<b>Jr12-05</b>	<i>Veych</i>	If	When you run with foot runners you fatigue	Then How	Will you compete with horses	9
<b>Jr12-05</b>	<i>Veych</i>		[If you are fearful] In a peaceful land	Then How	[Will you fear] in the Jordan thicket	10

Our new explanation of the Midrash is as follows: *There are 10 keywords (leshonoth) of a fortiori in the bible.* Again, the emedation is based on the fact that, indeed as we saw on Sunday, there are much more than 10 examples. So the 10-ness mentioned in the Midrash must refer to something other than verses. We suggest it refers to 10 keywords. Here are the 10 keywords

- There is always a keyword prior to the *more serious* clause. The bible uses 5 keywords: then how (veych), certainly (af), and certainly (veaf), how much (mah), and would it not (haloh). We have already seen on Sunday that the Midrashic interpreted of **Es09-12** is novel and not accepted by major translations. So the Midrash is indeed making a novelty.
- The keywords before the *lesser* clause are of 3 types. There may be a blank; once (Example 9) the bible use *if (ki)*, and frequently the bible uses the word *behold (Hen)*.

- Finally the major clause itself comes in two types: Full sentences and phrases. Thus example 8: a) *The Jews have not listened to me* and b) *Pharoh will not listen to me*. This example illustrates *full sentence* approach of the major clause However example 4 illustrates a phrase approach to the *major clause*.
- Behold: While I am alive with you today you are rebellious against God
- and certainly
- after my death.

Notice that the *more serious* clause is a phrase *after my death*. The corresponding full version would read

- Behold: While I am alive with you today you are rebellious against God
- and certainly
- after my death, you will be rebellious against God.

We can further clarify this using example 8. We present a phrase form instead of the full sentence form.

- Behold: The Jews did not listen to me
- and certainly
- Pharoh.

**Summary:** We have classified this Rashi as **database-grammar**. Using a **database** query, *list fortioris mentioned in the bible*, we have uncovered a **grammatical** rule on how to express an a fortiori argument. You express an a fortiori argument by

- using a lesser and more serious clause
- prefixing the lesser clause with a blank, behold or if
- prefixing the more serious clause with one of five keywords: *then how, certainly, and certainly, were it not, how much*
- Presenting the clauses using phrases or complete sentences

This combination of 3 prefixes, 5 prefixes and 2 forms yields 10 phrases of fortiori.

We have amended the midrash to read *there are 10 phrases (leshonoth) of a fortiori*. This is similar to the Rashi commentator emendation of the Midrash: *10 a fortioris in the bible*. Just as the Rashi commentators interpreted *torah* broadly to mean *bible*, and just as they based themselves on the text of verses, so too, the **Rashi Newsletter**, based on the text of verses, interpreted *fortiori* to mean *phrases of fortiori*.

## 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