

## **The 10 RashiYomi Rules**

*Their presence in Rashis in VaEthChaNaN*

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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.*

*Hi*

*This issue highlights common fallacies in reading Rashi. Rashi should not be approached with what is the problem; rather Rashi should be approached with what is the solution.*

Rashi sometimes appears to amend biblical texts. These strange Rashis are explained.

Rashi never believed in magical effects. Thus the famous Rashi/midrash *watch and remember were said in one utterance* is explained in a simple rational way.

Finally, we oppose the practice of counting Rashis by counting the biblical words/phrases cited by Rashi.

*Hope you enjoy*

*Russell Jay Hendel, President, Rashiyomi*

*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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Verse	Verse text	Rashi rule	Rashi subrule	Rashi rule #	Brief explanation of Rashi
Dt04-10b	See Dt04-10b				

Dt04-10c	Laws for you to learn (yilmedun) and teach (yelaymaydon) to your children	Grammar	Verbs	3	*The active form of LMD means to learn * The intensive form of LMD means to teach *Here, teach is the causative form of learn *It means to cause others to learn We compare Ex20-08 and Dt05-12 Ex20-08 <i>Remember</i> the Sabbath to sanctify it Dt05-12 <i>Watch</i> the Sabbath to sanctify it So one must both Commemorate the Sabbath and also Watch and guard it (avoid lapses) This corresponds to "dos" and "donts"
Dt05-12a	Remember /Watch the Sabbath	Parallelism		4	In this verse Rashi lists grammatical function To conquer: This is the activity, verb Nationa greater than you: Direct object, who was conquered From before you: Indirect object, for whom the conquering was done
Dt04-38a	God conquered nations greater than you, from before you	Grammar		3	
Dt04-08a	Who is a great nation? One that has righteous laws	Meaning	Synecdoche	2	Just as HONEY means anything SWEET BREAD means any FOOD So too RIGHTEOUS refers to anything PROPER

## Grammar-Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Thur-Fri 8/18-19/2016 Dt04-10b,c

**Background:** [Moses is describing the Revelation (at Sinai)]

**Biblical Text:** *[Remember] The day you stood before God at Mount Sinai, when God told me, Assemble the nation and I will cause them to listen to my words,*

- so that they learn (**yilmedun**) to revere me all the time they are on the land
- [and so that] they teach (**yelamaydoon**) their children.

**Rashi:** *The Hebrew root used in both underlined words is the same, Lamed - Mem-Daleth.*

- In the active tense: **YilMeDoon**, it means to learn
- In the intensive tense: **YeLaMaydoon**, it means to cause others to learn, to teach

Comment: Notice how

- In English: Learn and teach are different verbs
- In Hebrew: Learn and Teach come from the same verb (**LMD**). In one case the verb is active, to learn while in the other case it is causative, to teach, to cause others to learn.

**Contribution of Rashi commentators:** All Rashi commentators bring both Rashi comments together and use the **Grammar** principle (as we have outlined above), distinguished the Active and Causative.

Also note that the intensive tense in Hebrew, the **Piel**, can indicate both intensity as well as cause. Thus the **Piel** can act like the **Hifil** which is also causative.

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:** The Rashi Newsletter in this case simply reflects the Grammar rule mentioned by the Rashi commentators.

The Rashi Newsletter has also modified the concept of *how* Rashis are counted.

Traditionally Rashis are counted by verse citations. A typical Rashi will list a phrase or word from the verse (e.g. **Teach** in the above verse) and then list some comments (e.g. **Teach**: Teach to others). In old Rashi manuscripts the verse part of the Rashi, the header, is separated from the Rashi comment by a period. In modern chumashim, the verse part of the Rashi is bolded.

However in the case before us it would be incorrect to count 2 Rashi comments

- **Learn.** Learn for oneself
- **Teach.** Teach to others.

Clearly the two Rashi comments form one whole. In fact Rashi's only reason for explaining the meaning of *learn* is contrastive to *teach*. Thus the Rashi Newsletter introduces the idea that the count of Rashis can follow principles other than how many verse citations there are.

## **Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Sat 8/20/2016 Dt05-12a**

**Background:** [Moses is reviewing the 10 commandments]

**Biblical Text:**

- **Dt05-12a** *Watch* the Sabbath day in order to sanctify it
- **Ex20-08a** *Remember* the Sabbath day in order to sanctify it

**Rashi:** The Exodus 10 commandments says *remember* while the Deuteronomic 10 commandments says *watch*. Both words - *remember* and *watch* - were said in one utterance, in one word and heard simultaneously.

**Contribution of Rashi:** In this charming example, Rashi himself *fully*

explains his reasoning. The Rashi is derived from the Mechiltah, an exegetical compilation on Exodus. The derivation uses the **parallelism** method.

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:** First, the Rashi Newsletter explicitly identifies the rule as the **parallelism** rule. Second, we still have to explain what *watch* and *remember* indicate. The traditional approach, as explained in Jewish law is that

- *Remember* indicates a commemoration - making the Sabbath memorable. So the Talmudic Sages illustrate *remember* with the Rabbinical obligation to toast the Sabbath over wine, (Kiddush) when it comes in.
- *Watch* indicates an avoidance of bad things (sort of like *dos and don'ts*).

Third, the **Rashi Newsletter** addresses the poetic (and fanciful) statement *in one utterance, one word and one act of hearing*. Such an utterance vests a sort of magic in what happened. Not so. The Rashi Newsletter gives a straightforward interpretation consistent with the parallelism. In my article *Biblical Formatting*, Jewish Bible Quarterly, accessible at [www.Rashiyomi.com/biblicalformatting.pdf](http://www.Rashiyomi.com/biblicalformatting.pdf)

I compare parallelism to use of footnotes. Consider the following modern rendition of the parallelism

=====  
Remember<sup>(1)</sup> the Sabbath

NOTES: (1) Includes watching the Sabbath  
=====

Such a modern rendition using footnotes fulfills the description "Remember and watch are in one utterance (go together)." But in this

modern rendition there is less magical meaning. The poetic phrase "in one utterance" is simply a requirement to *treat* the two words as applying at the same time.

Fourth: We have actually explained what happened at the revelation. To understand this, recall that prophecy is never like a broadcast. It is always internal. There are no sound waves on the outside, only dream visions with certain utterances.

The revelation was a national shared dream vision. Now consider, **Ex16-28** tells us that *some* Jews violated the Sabbath by seeking Manna. So it stands to reason that

- Those Jews who violated the Sabbath, heard in their dream visions at Sinai, *watch the Sabbath*. Contrastively,
- Those Jews who watched the Sabbath in regard to the manna, heard in their dream visions at Sinai, *Remember the Sabbath*.

So indeed, *remember* and *watch* were said in one utterance and one word and one hearing. The contribution we have made is that the two words were heard simultaneously by two (actually 600000) people. Each person in the shared prophetic dream heard what was important for him/her.

## **Grammar *Daily Rashi* Sun 8/21/2016 Dt04-38a**

**Background:** [Moses is recounting God's favors to the Jewish people]

**Biblical Text:** To

- Conquer (*verb*)
- Nations, bigger and greater than you (*direct object*)

- From before you. (*indirect object*)

**Rashi**: To understand the verse reverse the word order and reread it

- To Conquer (*verb*)
- From before you (*indirect object*)
- Nations, bigger and greater than you (*direct object*)

**Contribution of Rashi NewsLetter**: The Rashi commentators do not see a need to add to Rashi's comment. The Rashi Newsletter explicitly classifies this Rashi comment as a comment on **Grammatical** Function. As is well known each part of a sentence has a function

- The verb is the activity the sentence discusses
- The subject is the entity/person that does this activity
- The direct object is the entity/person on whom the subject does this activity
- The indirect object is the entity/person for whom the subject does this activity on the direct object

We have indicated the grammatical functions in parenthesis.

Why however does Rashi explain this as *reverse the word order and reread the sentence*. Did Rashi for example believe that the biblical text was corrupt?

Rather, Rashi believed the text was fine. However the indirect object of the sentence - *from before you* - occurs at a distance from the verb - *to conquer* - and is interrupted by a rather long phrase - *nations bigger and greater than you*. Rashi's sole intent in reversing the sentence order was

to emphasize that - *from before you*- is the indirect object.

Why then did Rashi not explicitly say this? Because the language describing grammatical function was crude in Rashi's time. He therefore suggested restructuring the sentence in order to emphasize that *from before you* is an indirect object.

But why then did God not write the sentence more clearly. Why did God leave the indirect object in a sentence position where it could be confusing and misleading. The answer lies in a grammar topic not always taught, *grammatical positional emphasis*. The sequence of words in a sentence emphasize importance. Let us examine

- *To conquer* - this is the most important message of the sentence. God conquered
- *Nations, bigger and mightier than you* - this is the main point of conquest. Not for whom the conquest was done - for the Jews - but rather whom God conquered. God conquered very powerful nations.
- *from before you* - This is a secondary point of the sentence. God conquered these nations so that when Israel entered the land they shouldn't bother them. The main point of the sentence is that God conquered powerful and mighty nations.

**Summary:** The biblical text is fine as is. The word order indicates the ideas that Moses wished to emphasize. However, the rewriting of the verse, although changing some emphasis, makes it easier to understand. The sole purpose of Rashi recommending rewriting of the verse was to *illustrate* a clearer version.

**Grammar-Meaning *Daily Rashi* Mon 8/22/2016**  
**Dt04-08a**

**Background:** [Moses is describing the greatness of the Jewish people. ]

**Biblical Text:** We present 2 readings of **Dt04-08a**

**Reading #1:** *Who is a great nation? One that has righteous statutes and ordinances*

**Reading #2:** *Who is a great nation? One that has the statutes and ordinances of righteous people.*

**Rashi:** *Righteous: Proper.*

**Contribution of the Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Sifsay Chachamim and**

**Rashi commentators:** Unanimously the Rashi commenators use **Reading #1.** Unanimously they identify the problem that righteous is an adjective describing people not inanimate laws. Unanimously, they only explain the problem, not Rashi's solution.

So this Rashi is ideal. It shows the *problem* approach to Rashi. Rabbi Boncheck in his well and leisurely written series calls this *What is bothering Rashi?* In fact, Rabbi Boncheck once explained to me - when I asked him why he used this approach - "Russell: It is not me; everyone dealing with Rashi starts with the *problem.*"

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:** The Rashi Newsletter's approach, is not *the problem* but *the solution.* What is Rashi solving? How is he solving it. We offer two solutions corresponding to the 2 readings.

**Reading #1:** There is a universal (in all languages) literary technique, synecdoche, which says that any word can broaden and generalize in meaning in such a way that the original meaning of the word is simply a good or best example. Here are some examples from English

- *Honey* can refer to anything sweet

- *Bread* can refer to food in general
- *Bread* can even refer to ones profession (*plumbing is my daily bread*) since a good example of why one earns a living is to eat bread
- *Glasses* refers to spectacles since the main part of the spectacles is the glass part.

In a similar manner, applying *synecdoche* to *righteous* we obtain

- *Righteous* can refer to any *thing* that is *proper*.

Summary: What the Rashi Newsletter has added to the Rashi commentators is the *solution* to the *problem*. Yes, *righteous* refers to people, but there is a technique in all languages, *synecdoche*, allowing it to refer to anything proper. This point about *synecdoche* is crucial to understanding Rashi.

Reading #2: We can alternatively approach this Rashi using the **Grammar** rule vs. the **Meaning** rule. Juxtaposed words in Hebrew can mean

- Noun-adjective pairs (*proper (righteous) statutes and laws*)
- The possessive (*the statutes and laws of the righteous*).

Rashi would then be explaining what type of statutes, laws and customs the righteous have. They in fact have *proper* laws.

## 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 don't 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) 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