

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in Shemini
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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 year I am focusing on parallelism, that is, those Rashis that can be derived from tabular representations of verses.

Welcome to the Lissy Garden, the beautiful name by which the mystics called the book of VaYiQRaH. Why did they call it this? Because its laws are not based on Boolean logic but rather on the nuances of parallelism. In Hebrew, advice is a tree

(aytzah-aytz), a paragraph is a branch, and a word is a leaf (milah, meliloth). The nuances of a word are the petals giving fragrance in response to the zephyrs. As we stroll the beautiful Lilly Garden of VaYiQRAH we will see many charming Lilly petals and the laws they correspond to.

I will attempt to send out the Parshah over a week in advance.

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.

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Parallelism *Daily Rashi Lv19-14b, Dt27-18a Daily*

Rashi Thur Apr 27, 2017

Verse	Curse vs. Prohibition	Blind	Main Verb	Object-1	Blind	Indirect Object
Lv19-14		Before a blind person	Do not place	an obstacle		
Dt27-18	Cursed be		Whoso deceives (causes to wander)		A blind person	On the road
Rashi and Talmud		Emphasis: Directly before a blind person So I can sell a shipload of pork cans to a Jewish supermarket owner. True he will sell them to Jewish customers but I am not directly placing the pork before them (it is second hand)	There is a difference between <i>placing</i> and deceiving, causing to <i>wander</i> . I can't deliver pork to a Jewish person because I am <i>placing</i> the stumbling block. But if the pork can drops I can pick it up; it was right there anyway and I have not <i>placed</i> it.	There is an emphasis on more than deception. It must be deception <i>with</i> an obstacle A phone is not an obstacle. It has legitimate purposes. I can sell a phone to a reform Jew even though <i>sometimes</i> he will use it improperly.		Emphasis in one verse on physical stumbling block before the blind; the other verse can be speaking about non-roads, that is the spiritually blind.

TUESDAY: May 2 2017

Today we will have a bit of a treat. Normally, the Rashi Newsletter only explains the Rashi on a verse. But several times I have indicated that Rashi expects students and teachers to apply his methods to other parts of the verse. So today, *besides* the Rashi comments which only focus on one parallelism, I will analyze all parallel differences.

Additionally, today's digest affords an opportunity to show how scholars do not always treat our biblical commentaries with respect. David Weiss Halivni wrote a book, *Peshat and Derash*, in which he selected todays Rashi as an example of something whimsical, devoid of grammatical logic, and read into the text. Halivni then goes on to claim that the Talmudic Rabbis were not concerned with simple meaning and truth the way we are; they were concerned with relating the oral law to the written law.

What I will show is that HaLivni blatantly ignored principles of **Parallelism** which were available to him at that time and did not do due diligence. The Rashi and Talmudic comments are all logical as we shall show.

To introduce the Rashi comments I first give a brief synopsis of the law. The law appears to prohibit helping sinners who are spiritually blind. The following four laws are of interest.

- *The verse seems to prohibit putting an obstacle before a blind person walking. However, the Talmud states that it is equally prohibited to give bad advice to a spiritually blind person. Isn't this stretching things a bit? In fact, Halivni severely criticizes the Talmudic Rabbis for using such an interpretation.*
- *If I am in a supermarket and someone Jewish drops a can of pork there is no prohibition of my picking up the can and giving it back to them (Contrastively, there is a prohibition of my picking up a can of pork for a Jewish person and delivering it to his house) Thus in this case I am helping the sinner.*
- *I can sell a phone to a reform Jew even though it is clear that he will use it on the Sabbath. In this case I am helping the sinner.*
- *I can sell a truckload of pork cans to a Jewish store owner in a Jewish neighborhood where it is clear that many Jewish customers will purchase this pork. This in this case I am helping the sinner.*

Our goals are two-fold: We will show that:

- The simple meaning of the biblical texts, cited in the opening table, support these laws.
- The verses do *not* prohibit helping a person. What they do prohibit is at the end of the digest.

WEDNESDAY: May 3, 2017

First let us clarify if the verse really prohibits deceiving someone spiritually blind. The verse appears to place a physical obstacle before a real blind person on the road. Isn't it reading into the verse to see other prohibitions? This is Halivni's main objection.

Rashi, startlingly, has two answers.

- Only one of the verses (See the table at the beginning of the digest) mentions an obstacle *on the road*. The other verse does not say *on the road* and the implication and nuance seems to be on any deception and any obstacle even if not physical (Rashi, **Dt27-18a**)
- Remarkably, Rashi says almost the same thing in **Lv19-14b**. I am indebted to Rabbi Boncheck for emphasizing in his books that one should not just say that *Rashi repeated himself*. One should dig into the verse and look for additional issues. In fact, there were two problems addressed by Rashi. One problem was why *on the road* is in only one verse.
- The other problem is that throughout the Bible, obstacle is spelled (analogously in English) *o-b-s-t-a-c-l-e* except in **Lv19-14b** where it is spelled defectively *o-b-s-t-a-c-l*, without the terminal *e*. For those who know Hebrew, the Hebrew, *michshol* is always spelled with a *vav* in the middle except in **Lv19-14b** where there is no *vav*, a defective spelling.
- In my article *Biblical Puns* I cite secular literature that many *secular scholars* consider puns to be grammatical tools. They are not fancies that the reader reads into the text, but grammatically deep nuances that the author writes!!! The word *metaplasmus* indicates a deliberate misspelling that nuances profound thoughts in an objective grammatical way.
- We now understand Rashi: **Lv19-14b** talks about a defectively spelled *obstac*, and hence should be interpreted not as a real physical obstacle, but rather a *spiritual obstac*. By spelling it defectively the Bible indicates an obstacle that has a defect in its obstacleness: It is not a true physical obstacle but a spiritual obstacle.

Anyone, certainly Halivni, could due a simple database dump and find out that *obstacle* is spelled defectively only once in the entire bible. I believe it is a lack of serious scholarship not to read the nuances, puns and innuendos of the Bible and treat it dryly.

THURSDAY: May 4, 2017

We can now turn to some of the laws. Notice that one verse speaks about *deceiving* - just a **verb** - while the other verse speaks about *placing an obstacle* - a verb-object pair. *Placing an obstacle* emphasizes that the object must be a real obstacle.

But suppose the object has a dual use: For example, a phone can be used permissively during the week but cannot be used on the Sabbath. A phone is not an obstacle. Therefore, there is no prohibition against selling a phone to a reform Jew. True you are helping them sin but what you sold is not exclusively an obstacle and hence it is permissible.

The general far-reaching law is what we just stated:

- *If something has a permissible and prohibited use there is no violation of deceiving the blind;*
- *If something exclusively has a prohibited use there is a violation of deceiving the blind.*

Thus, importantly, the emphasis in the prohibition is on an object that is *exclusively* an obstacle.

FRIDAY: May 5, 2017

The Talmud also distinguishes between *place* and *deceive*.

- For me to deliver a pork can to a reform Jew is to *place* the obstacle (the pork can) before a spiritually blind person. Hence, there is prohibition.
- But if the pork can dropped out of the Jew's hand in the supermarket, there is no prohibition of my helping the person by picking up the can and giving it to him. I am not *placing* the obstacle, it was already there.

We see here that there is no prohibition on helping the spiritually blind; the prohibition is on going out of our way to place an obstacle before them.

Saturday: May 6, 2017

The last Talmudic comment has to do with where the word blind occurs in the verse. This is called *syntactic sequence*. The normal syntactic sequence in Hebrew is **Verb Object Indirect Object**. Some simple sentences are 1) *Place the tea bag in the hot water*; 2) *Eat your food with a fork*; 3) *Eat fat sparingly*.

When the word order is reversed, it connotes some type of *emphasis*. This is true whether the speaker is God or human. Some examples are 1) *With a fork, eat your food* would indicate an emphasis that one should use specifically a fork, not a spork or chopsticks, 2) *In hot water, place the tea bag* would indicate an emphasis that tea should *only* be made with hot water, not with hot milk or other beverages.

But then, if the verse says *Before a blind don't place an obstacle*, there is added emphasis of not doing it *before the blind*, that is *directly before the blind*. The emphasis is indicated by the deviation from ordinary sentence order.

What does the emphasis imply: It implies that you can't *directly* place an obstacle; *indirectly* however is not prohibited. You are only responsible for worrying about the *immediate direct* consequences of your actions.

So

- I can't sell a pork can to a reform Jew, but
- I can sell a pork shipment to a store owner who has many Jewish customers since I am not directly placing the pork before them.

Disclaimer: In all these examples I am only addressing the issue of whether *Don't place an obstacle before the blind* has been violated. As in all areas of Jewish law, other considerations may apply. My sole purpose here is to explain the *Before the Blind prohibition*.

CONCLUSION:

We conclude by re-analyzing the law. The Torah never prohibited *helping sin*. It rather prohibited *helping sin* when the help is *exclusive, direct and not already there*. We see here that the Torah is describing the boundaries of moral responsibility. You are not responsible for 2nd hand effect or an off-use effect of something you give. You are only responsible if the help is direct, immediate, exclusive and not already there.

I hope you have enjoyed this digest where besides analyzing the Rashi comment we also analyze similar Talmudic comments. As we have shown, this is the proper way to study Rashi. We also see, how modern scholars such as Halivni, did not do due diligence in trying to understand these laws. If you want more digests like this one, please email me at Rashiyomi@Gmail.Com with *Want More* in the subject line.

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHIRULE

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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 (Homonyms)** 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