

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis in BeHaR BeChuKoThai

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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 Lilly 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

Today we have occasion to analyze the
difference between Rashi's approach and a
modern scholars' approach We will see the
meticulousness with which Rashi
approaches the text.

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

Russell Jay Hendel, President, RashiYomi

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Database *Daily Rashi* Lv19-14c, Lv19-32c, Lv25-17a, Lv25-36a, Lv25-43a Daily Rashi Tue-Sat May 16-20 2017

Background: There are

- 613 commandments
- Only 5 (0.8%) explicitly mention *fear of God* as a reason for doing the commandment
- The five commandments are presented in the table below. Let us see how Rashi and modern scholarship approach these verses.

Rashi: Rashi uses a modern database approach: He asks *what commonality does these five commandments have? Why are they chosen and singled out to be justified with "fearing God?"* Rashi's answer is *'Commandments where subterfuge is possible, where human verification is not possible, where fulfillment of the commandment is dependent on one's inner intentions, such commandments justify obedience with fear God since only God knows man's true intentions. As Rashi concludes, All commandments dependent on inner intent have stated by them fear God as justification.*

Some highlights from the table below are as follows:

- Various forms of teasing - making fun of someone's weakness, giving bad advice, honoring people (elders) - all these have a subjective element: A person teasing or giving good advice can say 'I intended to help'; a person not honoring an elder can say 'I didn't see him.' Therefore, these commandments state *fear God*.
- Similarly, a monetary crime that can be avoided with a dummy corporate setup has a *fear God* stated as the reason. This does not apply to theft but it does apply to taking interest on loans since a person can set up a legal dummy corporation with a non-Jew who loans on interest.

By contrast modern scholarship has been lax on this. Consider the following analysis by Christine Hayes author of *What is Divine about Divine Law*. The following can be said

- Dr Hayes show impeccable scholarship on ancient conceptions of law. She shows how certain traditions (e.g. Greek) had a law based on rationality while other traditions (e.g. Pauline Christianity) had a law based on authority. She also shows that many themes such as oral recitation of the law belonged to many cultures.
- However, Dr Hayes shows a certain sloppiness when analyzing biblical texts. Let us examine. She is of the opinion that Rabbinic tradition had conflicting strands on law: Authority/Power vs. Rational.
- In her book (among other proofs) she cites the phrase "fear God" as belonging to the power/authority strand: Do something because I God order it; I have the power to enforce.
- Why do I criticize this? Because she doesn't do what Rashi and any serious scholar should do. She doesn't ask the questions: How often does this occur? Is there a commonality to these occurrences? Is this consistent with the rest of the Bible.

As already indicated, she uses the phrase *fear God* as proof of a power approach. But as Rashi shows the *fear God* argument is used sparingly and only on commandments where human enforcement is not possible. Furthermore, the idea that verbal abuse, or giving bad advice, lack a rational basis is rather absurd.

I have brought this example to show the difference between a shallow approach based on reading into texts and the careful scholarly approach of Rashi based on a search for commonality.

From time to time I will analyze other arguments in this book which also show a certain sloppiness.

Comment: One more note. The Lubavitcher Rebbe was of the opinion that when Rashi brought two reasons he was satisfied with neither. I have suggested that the

1st opinion is what a shallow reading of the text might show and Rashi brings it to help the beginning student. The 2nd explanation is always the true explanation.

My reason for opposing the Rebbe, who of course had many strong proofs, is this table. On **Lv25-36a** Rashi *first* mentions that *fear God* is mentioned by the prohibition of taking interest since people are attracted to money.

That certainly sounds reasonable. But it only explains one of the five commandments with *fear God!* So this explanation is shallow and must be rejected.

Rashi's *2nd* explanation - the person could set up a dummy corporation, a non-Jew collecting interest on loans - is consistent with the other 4 verses where *fear God* is mentioned. From this example, I argue that the 2nd explanation of Rashi is always the true one while the first explanation is what one might think but has problems.

Verse with “fear God”	Topic / Commandment	Why ‘fear God’ mentioned here	Alternate reasons
Lv19-14c	No stumbling blocks (bad advice) before blind/ignorant people	Not subject to human verification. A person can claim ‘I had good intentions’	
Lv19-32c	Stand before the elderly	Not subject to human verification. A person can claim ‘I didn’t see him and therefore didn’t stand’	
Lv25-17a	Don’t verbally abuse people and don’t give bad advice	Not subject to human verification. A person can claim ‘I had good intentions’	
Lv25-36a	Do not take interest on loans	Not subject to human verification. Jew A can set up a dummy bank run by non-Jew B. Non-Jew B loans on interest to say Jew C. But B & A divide proceeds. The charging of interest by B is permissible!	People are attracted to money. They think nothing wrong on earning money on a loan since they don’t have access to it
Lv25-43a	Do not overwork Jewish slaves (Don’t	Not subject to human verification. A person	

	e.g ask him to make coffee if you don't want coffee now)	can always claim, 'At the time I asked for it I needed it.'	
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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