

## The 10 RashiYomi Rules

### *Their presence in Rashis in BaLaQ*

Vol. 27#19 - Adapted from **Rashi-is-Simple**

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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.*

*Very often I am asked why I treat Rashi as objective with only one true explanation. So today we do a Rashi where two equally plausible explanations are given. This is challenging, since the parallelism must cover both cases naturally.*

*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](mailto:RashiYomi@GMail.Com).

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**Parallelism Daily Rashi Nu24-05a-c Sun-Tue 7/2-4/17**

**Background:** The table below gives one of the famous blessings that Bilam gave the Jewish people. This blessing is actually part of our daily prayers.

**Biblical Text with Rashi Commentary:**

	Introductory stem (Applies to both lines)	Interpretation 1	Interpretation 1	Interpretation 2	Interpretation 2
	<i>How good are</i>	<i>Your tents</i>	<i>Jacob</i>	<i>Your tents</i>	<i>Jacob</i>
		<i>Your dwellings</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Your dwellings</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Rashi Nu24-05a,b,c	Rashi doesn't comment on this but it is common in parallel verses that a <i>stem</i> in the first part of the parallelism elliptically carries over to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> part. It is <i>as if</i> it said twice <i>How good are</i> on both lines. By saying this line once the speaker forces the listener to pay attention simultaneously to both parts of the verse	<b>Tents</b> = individual houses/tents known for their modesty (Doors don't face each other); <b>Dwellings</b> =Camp positions. Jacob laid down that tribes that get along with each other should be near each other to avoid strife.	<b>Israel</b> = When we are in our own land <b>Jacob</b> =when we are in exile.	<b>Tents</b> =The Temple tent in the wilderness which was called the Tent of meeting <b>Dwellings</b> = Future permanently built Temple.  Use of plural refers to the various temporary dwelling places of the Tent and the various permanent Temples including the destroyed Temple (So e.g. today we are spiritually influenced by the western wall)	<b>Israel</b> = When we are in our own land; so it refers to permanent Temple <b>Jacob</b> =when we are in exile; so it refers e.g. to the Wilderness when we were not yet in our own land

**Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:** The Rashi Newsletter contributes the reason behind the Rashi comment, **Parallelism**. In this particular verse, Rashi offers two distinct interpretations which are equally valid examples of parallelism. Let us go over each interpretation separately.

- *How good are*. This is the stem, introductory phrase. In parallel verse-halves very often one phrase serves as an introduction to both verse-halves. In other words:
- Actual Text: *How good are your tents, Jacob*  
-----*your dwellings, Israel*
- To be read as: *How good are your tents, Jacob*  
[*How good are*] *your dwellings, Israel*
- The phrase in brackets is not there physically but the reader *knows* to extend it from the first verse half.
- *Your tents, Jacob*: Rashi takes a simple approach. The distribution of tents of the 1/2 million families avoided tents doors opposite each other. This was a sign of respect for privacy and modesty.
- *Your dwellings, Israel*: Rashi takes this as referring not to the tent of the *individual*, but the dwelling of the *nation*. To understand this, we recall that the 12 tribes did not get along with each other. For example Joseph did not get along with Reuven, Shimon, and Judah who sold him into slavery. Jacob ordered his coffin held with a certain formation by the 12 children. The formation reflected those children who got along with each other. For example Judah, Yissachar and Zevulun camped on the east side of the Jewish camp. Here, Judah and Yissachar were known for their scholarship (Yissachar were expert astronomers and involved in calendar creation); Yissachar and Zevulun camped together since they had a business partnership

Notice how this parallelism makes sense: The first verse-half speaks about the individual (the tent) while the second verse half speaks about the nation.

Rashi then gives a second interpretation.

- *Your tents Jacob.* The Hebrew word for the Temple in the Wilderness is *tent of meeting*. Bilam praises the establishment of Temples in the midst of difficult journeys. Rashi has to deal with the plural, *tents*. Rashi sees this as a reference that throughout Jewish History the Temple was in various temporary locations (Shilo, Nov etc). Rashi is not saying Bilam was prophetic about these. Rather, Rashi says that Bilam was praising the Jewish people for *always* having a Temple tent no matter how temporary their dwelling was. Notice that *Jacob*, the designation of Jews in their exile, not in its own state, *goes with the Tent-Temple idea*.
- *Your Dwellings Israel:* The Temples are also called *Dwellings* in Hebrew. Of course, the Jews never had a permanent Temple yet. But Bilam knows that they are about to enter Israel and conquer the land. He visions the day when they have a *permanent Temple dwelling*. The plural could easily refer to the two Temples. Rashi takes it as also referring to the plurality of Temple states. Even when the Temple is destroyed, it still has spiritual significance. Thus, today, even though we have no Temple we have the western wall; this destroyed Temple is a source of spiritual uplifting for us as we go there. Of course, *permanent Temple* neatly corresponds to *Israel*, the name for Israel when it is dwelling cently in the land.

## **Parallelism Daily Rashi Nu23-22d,e Wed-Thu 7/5,6/17**

**Background:** This verse relates the visions of Bilam who saw God's unique relation with the Jews.

**Biblical Text with Rashi Comments:** Please see the table on the next page.

**Contribution of Rashi Newsletter:** The Rashi Newsletter contributes that the driving force or cause of the Rashi is **parallelism**. According to Kugel (James L. *Kugel. The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History*. New York and London: Yale University Press, 1981) parallelism works climatically. The 2nd half of the parallelism expands and increases on the 1st half. We saw this in the first Rashi in

this digest where the first half of the verse spoke about the tents of the individual while the second half of the verse spoke about the camp of the nation. Thus, we climatically went from individual to nation.

Nu23-22	Nu23-22	With vs in	Rashi Nu23-22d:e
God does not scrutinize iniquity in Jacob; He does not see toil (of sin) in Israel	<i>The God, His Lord, is</i>	<i>With him</i>	Just <i>with</i> him. For example, if the Jews actually sin, God is still with him (the Jews)
	<i>The trumpet of the King is</i>	<i>In him</i>	<i>In him:</i> And during normal times when they don't sin God is ( <i>in him</i> ) amongst, not just <i>with</i> the people. There are trumpets and fanfare connoting friendship and love.

If one looks at the two verse halves in Nu23-22, they seem to be saying the same thing, *God is with the Jews*. Kugel urges us to see this theme developed in two stages.

- Stage 1: God is with the Jews *even when they sin*
- Stage 2: And when they are not sinning, He is amongst the Jews and their friend

To use Buber's famous phrase, God and the Jews have an I-Thou relationship at all times both bad (when Jews are sinning ) and good. Just to be clear, in the above bullets, *even when they sin* is not in the Biblical text. Kugel however sees it as necessary in order that Stage 1 and 2 make a climatic sequence - with: i) if they sin ii) otherwise friendly. Kugel (or Rashi) would infer this from the skillful use of prepositions: *with-in*. *In* connotes a stronger relationship than *with*.

A word about the 2nd half of the verse (Stage 2) is in order. The Hebrew word used is *Teruath* which *every* other place in the Bible means trumpet blast. Startlingly, Rashi looks at the *rua* of *Teruath* and relates it to friendship (Another meaning of this root). Rashi does not mention trumpet blasts at all.

What is Rashi's goal? i) To deny that *teruath* that always means trumpet blast here means something else? This doesn't sound right or logical. Therefore, ii) we interpret the Rashi as *supplementing* rather than *contrasting* the original meaning. Trumpet blasts, according to Rashi are not a sign of say power but a sign of friendship and caring. Rashi sees a dual meaning in the word *Teruath*. If you like, Rashi is explaining not the meaning of *Teruath* which means trumpet blast but rather the symbolism of the trumpet blasts; the trumpet blasts symbolize friendship.

I believe this approach to Rashi, where we see Rashi as building on known facts (instead of contradicting them) is important in appreciating Rashi. Without Rashi I would think of the verse as talking about trumpet blasts; with Rashi I see the verse as talking about trumpet blasts as a symptom of a festive holiday friendship between God and the Jews.

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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