

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis in Ki ThaVoH

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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

It is a new issue (Vol 28) and a New Year. This year I am focusing on non-Rashi comments. We have explained Rashi now for 18 years. We frequently say that Rashi intended that the teacher use the parallelism and besides explaining the Rashi comments also explain all nuances of the parallelism, the non-Rashi comments.

So this year I am focusing on complete explanations of all parallelisms including both the Rashi and non-Rashi comments.

Today I select some interesting parallelisms from Rashi. Although they are totally Rashi, it appears that Rashi avoided the simple meaning of the text. Explanation of

these Rashis sheds tremendous light on how to understand Rashi.

Dr. 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 Rabbi-Ishmael Daily Rashi Lv19-14b, Dt27-24a,26a Week 9/3/17

Background: The biblical paragraph **Dt27-16:26** presents the curses that were announced from the mountains upon entry to Israel.

Biblical Text and Rashi Text: The content of the 11 curses are presented in the table below along with the Rashi comments.

Curse in Dt27-16:26 on	Type of sin	Comment
Creating idolatry stealthily	Non Violent: Stealthily	
Despise his parents	Non Violent: Verbal	
Overtakes neighbor's boundary	Non violent: Monetary	
Causing a blind person to err in a path	1) Violent: Tripping a blind person 2) Non-violent: Giving bad advice	Rashi picks the non-violent (Lv19-14b)
Deviating justice for orphans/widows	Non violent: Verbal (verdict)	
Affair: Father's wife	Non violent: Affairs	
Affair: Bestiality	Non violent: Affairs	
Affair: Sister	Non violent: Affairs	
Affair: Mother-in-Law	Non violent: Affairs	
Smiting a person stealthily	1) Violent: Hitting but stealthily 2) Non violent: Verbal hit (Slander)	Rashi picks the non-violent (Dt27-24a)
Taking a bribe for murder	Non violent: Verbal (verdict)	
Doesn't uphold Torah law For purpose of performance	General idea: Non-violent prohibitions must be kept since they lead to violation of prohibitions of violence	Rashi: Dt27-26a , is a general comment unifying the 11 preceding specific comments.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: The following comments support the table above.

Comment 1 - Theme-Detail form: Notice how the 11 curses are for non-violent crimes such as sexual affairs, verbal crimes (e.g. bad verdicts) or bribes. The last row in the Table, **Dt27-26** presents

- A *general* curse to anyone not upholding the Torah for purposes of performance
- The earlier verses, **Dt27-16:25** contain curses on *specific* matters.

Thus, this biblical paragraph **Dt27-16:26** is written in a **specific-general** or **detailed-theme** form. The interpretation of such paragraphs is governed by the **Rabbi Ishmael** style rules. In this case we see the curses,

- not as *specific* to the 11 particular items mentioned but rather
- as *illustrative* to the general theme

But what is the general theme. Notice that **Dt27-26**

- Does not speak about performance but rather about
- Upholding for purposes of performance.

This creates a model that **Dt27-16:26** is speaking about non-violent sins which if violated will lead to violence and lawlessness. For example, if bribes are frequent in a judicial system, people will rebel violently because they don't expect justice. Similarly, if for example people play with border demarcation lines this will lead to violence (to defend property).

Comment 2 - Reinterpretation to non-violence: It is easy to see that most of the specific verses fall into the pattern of non-violence. But there are two exceptions:

- **Dt26-18** Causing a blind person to err in a path
- **Dt26-24** Hitting a person stealthily.

Clearly hitting a person and stumbling a blind person are both violent crimes. However, Rashi wanted to preserve the non-violent nature of the 11 curses. Hence,

Rashi interprets these two possible exceptions non-violently. The reason Rashi does this is not because of linguistic difficulties in the verse proper but rather because of difficulties in the paragraph context in which they reside.

- *Causing a blind person to err in a path* can mean either *stumbling* the person or *giving bad advice*. Rashi chose *giving bad advice* because it is consistent with the paragraph theme.
- *Hitting a person stealthily* could mean hitting a person; but consistent with idioms in other languages it could mean *shooting a person down reputationally* by slandering them.

Comment 3 - Why didn't the bible simply say so: But are these interpretations of Rashi the simple meaning of the text or are they homily. The **Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter** is that

- If *all I heard* was curse be who smites stealthily then indeed the simple meaning of the text would be physical hitting.
- But if the paragraph is in a non-violent context then the simple meaning is the contextual interpretation *shooting him down reputationally*.

We have here an important principle of Rashi: *A contextual interpretation takes precedence over a stand-alone literal interpretation.*

Comment 4 - Emphasis on consequences: I once heard the following objection to such interpretations of Rashi. *Certainly the bible knew how to describe slander. If Rashi's interpretation is the simple meaning of the text why didn't the Bible simply say curse be he who slanders his friend.*

But the answer to this is straightforward. The Bible wishes to communicate that slandering a person *is* the same as hitting a person. True the hitting and smiting may come later but the slanderer must be aware *now* of consequences of his actions.

Parallelism Daily Rashi Dt28-04a,b Week 9/3/17

Background: Dt28-04 occurs in the paragraph describing the blessings that

will occur if we obey God's commandments.

Biblical Text and Rashi Text: The blessings of **Dt28-04** are compactly presented in the Table below.

Dt28-04	Text of verse		Comments
<i>Blessed be</i>	Fruit	Your womb	1 st verse half: blessing <i>in birth</i> . 2 nd verse half: blessing <i>in growing up</i> .
	Fruit	Of earth	
	Fruit	Of your animals	
	The left-to-graze	Of your herds	Rashi: Dt28-04a,b Rashi gives some interesting etymologies which are commented on in the narrative below.
	Your fenced-in	Flocks	

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: First, the Rashi Newsletter notes that the verse is a nested parallelism as follows:

- The first verse half deals with blessings *in birth*, from people, plants or animals
- The 2nd verse half deals with blessings *in growing up* particularly for animals that are vulnerable.

The verse meaning and its parallelism are transparent. However, Rashi makes comments on etymologies which we now discuss.

Shin-Gimel-Resh: This biblical root means to *let out*. It is used (in the Talmud) in the sense of a herd (e.g. a herd of doves) which refers to the herd being let out to roam.

Such an interpretation, herd, fits in with the verse. Startlingly however, Rashi interprets this word to mean birth, a fetus *let out* of its mother's womb. In fact, this usage is found in the Bible at **Ex13-12**. Why does Rashi pick this interpretation, *birth*, when the parallelism requires an interpretation of herd?

This is an important principle in interpretation of Rashi.

- Rashi *appears* to avoid the contextual-parallel interpretation of herd
- Rashi *further appears* to interpret this as *birth* which refers back to the first part of the verse

- However, Rashi is giving a supplemental pun to an established meaning. Rashi expects that people know that the 2nd verse half is speaking about herds. To this fact he adds a pun a secondary meaning: The word *sgr* links to the first verse half because of its other meaning as birth.

So the principle of Rashi interpretation used here is that *sometimes Rashi will indicate an interpretation and intends that interpretation not to be exhaustive, the entire interpretation, but rather to be a secondary interpretation to the main one which he expects readers to know*. When seen this way Rashi is seen as deep and enriching taking the meaning of the word a step farther and linking to both the 1st and 2nd verse half.

Ayin-Shin-Tauv-Resh: This is a four letter root. In the context it refers to *herd or flock*. Rashi points out two possible etymologies: 1) If one deletes the **Tauv** from the root one obtains the 3 letter radical **ayin-shin-resh**, wealthy, pointing out that a flock of sheep brings wealth to its owners. 2) If one uses the Talmud meaning of rock it refers to making their owners economically solid as a rock.

In general, it is hard to interpret 4-letter roots. My own opinion (not in Rashi) is that *astar* refers to *fence*. So the entire phrase *astaroth tzonechah* would mean *fenced in flocks*. The etymology of *astar* would use a typical approach of breaking up 4-letter roots into two 2-letter roots: *as tar* which would mean *fixing (ayin - shin-hey) the roaming (tauв-vav-resh - to roam, spy, survey)*. Thus, the fence would *fix* the tendency of sheep to *roam* into areas where they could be attacked.

As one can see, it is difficult to find an explanation which hits it just right. This is further complicated by the fact that this root - **ayin-shin-tauv-resh** - hardly ever occurs in the Bible.

In summary: The parallelism teaches us that the 2nd verse half is speaking about flocks and herds which are blessing with continuation after the 1st verse half speaks about blessings in birth. However, Rashi is unsure what the etymology of the words used are.

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 (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