

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in ToLeDoTh
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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's Rashi is an old favorite-what are the flavors of Biblical commandments.

That is how many types of commandments are there.

As a special treat we bring a controversy between Rashi and Rav Hirsch on the meaning of Chok. We show that Rashi and Rav Hirsch agree; we also show there is no word indicating a biblical commandment without reason—all commandments have reasons!

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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**Meaning-Synonyms *Daily Rashi* Gn26-05a:f Sun-Thur
Nov/12-16/2017**

Background: God appears to the Patriarch Isaac and promises him blessing.
God gives the reason

Biblical Text:

Because Abraham

- *listened to my voice*
- *Watched my watch*

- *My commandments*
- *My statutes and*
- *My Torahs.*

Rashi Text: The text presents *five* descriptions of commandments. Rashi explains the meaning of each one. These Rashis are compactly summarized in the table below. The narrative afterwards elaborates further. Throughout, Rashi uses the **Meaning-Synonym** method by focusing on the specific nuances of each term.

We now elaborate.

My Voice: Here Rashi uses the **Database** method which shows that *voice* is a term indicating prophecy, for example, **Gn03-08, Nu07-89, Ez01-25, Ez03-12, 1K20-36**.

So *listening to My voice* refers to obeying specific prophetic commands such as the command to leave his home (**Gn12-01**) or the command to sacrifice Isaac (**Gn22-02**)

Gn26-05	Meaning of Term	Examples	Biblical basis
Abraham listed to my voice	Prophetic orders	Order to sacrifice Isaac, Order to leave home	My voice = prophecy: Cf. Gn21-12a, Nu14-21
He watched my watch	Rabbinic protective commandments	Don't fill rag with water on Sabbath since you naturally would wring it (Wringing a rag is biblically prohibited)	Watch=Biblical word for prophylactic rabbinic commandments. Cf. Lv18-30a,
My commandments	Rational laws	Theft, Murder,	
My statutes (chok)	Long range laws	Kosher laws	Statute (Chok) = commandments whose meaning appears over long range not short range (cf. Nu19-02)
My Torah's	Law basis with consequences	Biblical exegesis	Torah=principles. Lv06-07, Lv07-01,Lv07-11, Lv12-07 etc.

Watch My Watch: This verb-noun phrase both in meaning (*watch*) and in usage (e.g. **Lv18-30a**) connotes Rabbinic enactments that *watch* the biblical commandments. They are prophylactics that prevent deviation. For example, one can pray the entire night but rabbinically

(to prevent oversleeping) one should pray by midnight. Similarly, one should not fill a rag with water lest one ring it, something prohibited on the Sabbath.

The simple meaning of the text is not that Abraham observed rabbinic enactments but rather that he actively created his own Rabbinic fences to the commandments that God gave him.

Commandments (Mitzvah): This is a generic term for commandment. It refers to the typical commandment which has human counterparts such as the prohibitions of *murder, theft, ...*

Statutes (Chok): There is this view that Rashi believed that these commandments have no reason. Let us however look at the actual Rashi text. The *chukkim are commandments that non-Jews and inner temptation try to persuade us not to do. Examples include the Kosher and Shaatnez laws (You can't wear a garment made of wool and linen). Because there is no taste (reason) to the law; rather it is the decree of the King on his servants.*

This Rashi seems to say the **Chukim** have no reason but are decrees.

Rav Hirsch demurs. Chukim are items whose meaning is long range. My favorite way of explaining Rav Hirsch is to use the medical prohibition of excessive salt to avoid high blood pressure. Now

- Certainly the prohibition of salt is a rational medical commandment! But
- The reason is long range. If, for example, I go out without a coat in the winter, I will probably quickly catch a cold. The reason for the law is transparent and immediate. Contrastively, if I go out and have a salty pizza my blood pressure will not go up. Rather, if I have salty foods every day for many years then my blood pressure will probably eventually go up.

Thus, the law has a reason but the reason is long range. One does not see it immediately.

Let us now examine the example given by Rashi, the Kosher prohibition against eating ham. Here are the points to show that this has a reason but it is long range

- Like eating salt, eating ham, would not immediately damage your personality. You would not see any change the next morning.
- We follow the Ramban's explanation of Kashruth: If I eat ham, then I (or my community farmers) must raise pigs, and if someone raise's pigs then they are more likely to have dreams where pigs personify them leading them to improper behavior. Like the eating of salt which *eventually in many people* will lead to high blood pressure so too, the allowance of eating ham necessitates raising pigs and *eventually in many people* that will lead to personality imitation based on pigs.

But we are not through. Doesn't Rashi say the laws have no reason? Doesn't that prove that that is what he believed? To answer this I cite the actual Rashi language and show he does not say it.

Rashi Text (Gn26-06b, <i>chok, statute</i>)	Does this mean that the law has no reason	Is this consistent with long range nature of law
Laws which internal temptation and non Jews make fun (raise doubts) on	No! This does not mean that the law has <i>no</i> reason. It rather means that the reason is long range and hence easier to tempt a person on (like the prohibition of salt)	Yes! If the law is long range, then one doesn't <i>see</i> the prohibition immediately and hence it is easy to make fun and tempt a person.
Laws without taste (Reason)	No! The Talmudic word for reason is <i>sibbah</i> which also means <i>cause</i> . The word <i>taam</i> does not literally mean <i>reason</i> but rather means <i>taste</i> ; in other words does the law strike you immediately as <i>tasty</i> with benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The law has <i>reason</i> but no <i>taste</i>. • <i>Reason</i> refers to long range, <i>eventually most people</i> will show effects • <i>Taste</i> refers to an immediacy of benefits. This the law doesn't have.
Decrees of the King on his servants	A decree could equally refer to something without reason or something without taste	A decree could equally refer to something without reason or something without taste

In other words, the *chok, statute*, has a long range reason, like the prohibition of salt, and hence in the immediate future the law appears arbitrary without benefit, something that can be violated without immediate consequence.

My Toroth: Throughout Leviticus the word *torah*, the same word used to designate the five books of Moses, is used to designate groups of laws. For example, throughout Leviticus we find conclusory phrases like *this is the Torah of the elevation offering, this is the Torah of the sin offering, this is the Torah of the guilt offering, this is the Torah of the Minchah offering* (cf. **Lv06-07, Lv07-01, Lv07-11, Lv12-07** and many more).

So what does the word *Torah* mean? There is controversy on the root of *Torah*. One possibility is that it comes from **Hey-Resh-Hey** which literally means to become pregnant. When applied to the intellectual sphere it would mean, as the English idiom, *embryonic*. In other words, *the Torah of the sin-offering* are the embryonic principles of the sin-offering; to fully know the principles one must listen to the nuances. This is consistent with the book of Leviticus which the Rabbis affectionately call the *lily garden* because of its wealth of exegetical material.

Rashi explains *toroth* as referring to the oral law which in turn includes the exegetical derivations from the biblical text.

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