

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in Ki TiSSaH
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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 issue continues (1) our exploration of commandments in each parshah. Also, like last week, (2) we review use of multiple sources on the same verse to show how complementary midrashim enrich understanding a verse. Finally, we show (3) a great gem in the Golden Rambam Rashi series dealing with repentance.

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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 *Rashi Newsletter* Ex32-10a, Ex32-11a,Ex32-31a

Background: Recall, that after the Jews were redeemed by God from Egypt, and prophetically received the 10 commandments, they turned around and worshipped idols by creating a golden calf. God was very angry and Moses' prayer and intercession persuaded God to change his mind. There are multiple sources here

- **Ex32** presents Moses prayer to God
- **Dt09** presents Moses prayer to God

As usual by a parallelistic comparison of these passages we can infer nuances.

It turns out there are three beautiful primary commentaries on these passages

- The Exodus Rabbah Midrash
- The Deuteronomy Rabbah Midrash
- The Babylonian Talmud, Beracoth, 32.

So, this is a delightful exercise in seeing multiple biblical and midrashic sources intertwine.

As usual, the RashiYomi approach will try and clarify solid foundations to all Midrashim and avoid some of the

secondary attempts by the commentaries on the Midrash Rabbah and Talmud.

We start as usual with a parallelistic comparison of the verses in question. I am particularly fond of the first table, A, which was discovered by a computer program I wrote about 15 years ago, Rashiya. Rashiya gave me several novelty of derivation that I hadn't thought of myself.

We summarize below using three tables several important biblical texts and the Rashi/Midrashic derivations from them. A narrative further explains afterwards.

Table A

| Verse | God Addresses Moses | Key Extra Phrase | Obstinate nation | Obstinate nation |
|-----------------------|--|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| Ex32-09 | God said to Moses | | I see this nation | It is stiff-necked |
| Dt09-13 | God said to me | In order to say | I see this nation | It is stiff-necked |
| Reason for difference | <i>Deuteronomy is Moses narrative and is said in 1st person (to me)</i> | <i>So, it says explicitly that God spoke to Moses with in effect a request for Moses "to say" to talk back to him</i> | | |

Table B

| Verse | God speaking to Moses | Key Extra phrase | Threat to destroy | Make Moses into a great nation |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Ex32-10 | Leave me alone | <u>And I will get angry</u> | And I will destroy them | And Make you into a great nation |
| Dt09-14 | Leave me alone | | And I will destroy them <u>and blot out their name</u> | And make you into a greater nation <u>then them</u> |
| Explanation of Differences | Note: The Talmud says, "If it didn't explicitly say "Leave me alone" we couldn't say it. It teaches that Moses grabbed God by the lapels and refused to leave him alone till he gave in. See my explanation of this in Table C | <i>God is indicating (explicitly) that if Moses does not leave God alone (that is doesn't pray) then He will get angry and destroy them (So everything depends on Moses' prayer)</i> | <i>I have not seen an explanation why the extra underlined phrase is listed in Dt09-14</i> | <i>I have not seen an explanation why the extra underlined phrase is listed in Dt09-14</i> |

Table C

Moses prayer to God asking him not to destroy the Jewish people

- Why are you angry (*The golden calf can't do anything; so what, if they made a golden calf; it is not a threat to you*)
- If you destroy the Jewish people, Egypt will say you were helpless and killed them rather than admit your helplessness over other nations
- You have a contractual oath with the Patriarchs to make the Jewish people numerous

Narrative:

Various points are made by Rashi and the Midrashim. No one source - Rashi, Midrash, Talmud - summarizes all of them. Hence, we see the benefits of looking at multiple sources. We again emphasize that the Rashi-yomi approach is not historical but rather exegetical: What rule based inferences are present in each source? Let us review how the Midrash describes them.

- First: The Midrash indicates that God tells Moses that "It depends on you. If you don't pray I will destroy them." This appears peculiar. The Midrash (not Rashi or the Talmud) gives an analogy: "A King had a favorite son. One day the son was caught doing something bad. There was a guest present. The King said, "If there were no guest presents I would kill you immediately." The guest sensing that the King had lost

his temper proceeds to mention the sons many good points and how he was influenced to do these things and the King acquiesced to not killing him.

On a conceptual basis, we can say as follows: Nations need leadership. But if a nation is worshipping idols, God can't lead them since his presence would result in their death. Thus God in effect says to Moses, "I can't lead them; but if you want to lead them, you can probably prevent much evil and they won't have to be destroyed.' This gives us insight into the God-leader relationship.

But where is this learned from textually. I mention three sources

- When God speaks to Moses, He says, "in order to say (talk back)" (Table A)
 - When God asks Moses to leave him alone he explicitly points out that He is about to lose his temper (Table B)
- These sources more or less explicitly state that God requested Moses to intervene.

Rashi and the Talmud however seem to learn this from the phrase "Leave me alone" which by itself is inadequate. The Rashiyomi approach adds strong arguments. Note the Midrash with its charming King analogy gives us insight into the types of emotions going

around.

- Second: Moses prayed vigorously for the people. Rashi learns this from the phrase "Leave me alone." The Maharshah (a Talmudic commentary) learns this from the differences in nuances between the Hebrew words used: (*heref, hanichah*). The Talmud Beracoth uses graphic language: "Moses grabbed God by the lapels and said I wont leave you alone until you forgive them."

The Rashiomi approach learns this from the substance of the prayer not from a single word or phrase. An examination of Moses' prayer shows that Moses utters every type of argument some of which appear quite "silly". Moses says, "Idols have no power, so why are You angry; If you kill them Egypt will slander you and say you have no power" (See Table C). Thus from the substance of the prayer we learn that "Moses prayed vigorously ("grabbed God by the lapels")

There is an interesting side note on prayer here. After all the Jews *did* worship idols. It might be imagined that the *proper* prayer approach is submissive and passive. Not so! Moses argues vigorously. As the Talmud says, "He grabbed God by the lapels and refused to let go until He

gave in." Thus, we see that vigorous prayer is invited even in the face of sin.

Repentance - Ex32-31 - Rashi Rambam Golden Series

Background: Moses, in his prayer to God, mentions "This nation sinned a great sin, they made a golden god." Rashi and Rambam approach this verse differently

Rashi: Rashi includes sees this as an extension of Table C. It is another aggressive argument to get God to forgive the people. "You God caused this sin by showering on slaves all this gold; they had all this gold and did not know how to handle themselves so they made a golden god the way other people with gold make gods."

Rambam: Rambam, Chapter 2 of repentance, takes this as a prerequisite to confession and repentance: "The sinner must specify the details of the sin, for example, "they made a golden god."

Which is it: Confession or blame?

Rashiyomi suggests a combined approach. The idea here is that no one really just gets up and sins. Sin has an etiology. You can't repent until you understand the forces that steered you towards sin. If you are attracted to gold and the good life and like the way your neighbors make

golden idols and have parties, then understanding that, will help you avoid sin again. Thus, seeing your weaknesses and how they were used, is a requirement for effective confession and repentance. One has to in effect relive the sin in order to successfully avoid it.

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 (Hononyms)** 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