

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on Pinchas

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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.

We have studied parallelism for about a year now. We are trying a new format: We are covering all Rashi rules and giving brief explanations.

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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Daily Rashi Parallelism Nu22-11a,b Thu Jul 10, 2014

Rashis covered: Nu27-23

In today's issue we address several fallacies about Rashi. For example the following statements are all false

- ***Rashi sometimes uses word play to justify a comment***
- ***Rashi gave reasons to every difference in the text***

- **Rashi did not have an advanced understanding of Hebrew grammar**
We start with a Rashi based on parallelism.

Biblical Text: **Exercise #1:** Compare **Nu27-18** and **Nu27-23**

- God's request to Moses to invest Joshua
- Moses' actual investment of Joshua.

The solution to this Exercise is found in Table 1 below.

Verse	Who is speaking doing	Biblical text Verb	Object	Indirect Object
Nu27-18	God asks Moses to invest Joshua	<i>Place</i>	<i>Your hand</i>	<i>On him</i>
Nu27-23	Moses invests Joshua	<i>He placed</i>	<i>His hands</i>	<i>On him</i>

Table 1: Comparison of God's request to Moses and Moses' actual action.

Rashi: Do you notice the extra "s" in Nu27-33. God said to place a single hand while Moses placed both hands. This showed that Moses transferred his authority without jealousy or hard feelings.

References:

James Kugel, **The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History**, John Hopkins Press, **1981**

Russell Hendel; **Visual Representations of Biblical Poetic Parallelism**, Bridges Conference, Portugal, **2011**

Daily Rashi Parallelism Nu27-01b Fri Jul 11, 2014

Background: The following two verses discuss the petition of the daughters of a man named Tzelafchad. The daughters petitioned that his estate should be kept in the family. One issue was that he had no sons and if the estate was given to the girls their husbands would obtain the estate though marriage and it would leave the tribe. There were other issues as well such as whether the girls had a right to inherit. With this in mind look at the listing of the 5 girls in these two verses.

- **Nu27-01:** *Machlah, Noah, Chaglah, Milkah, Tirztah*
- **Nu36-11:** *Machlah, Tirztah, Chaglah, Milkah, Noah*

Rashi: There is no reason for the order change. All five were equal and hence the biblical text reverses the order to show that neither of them was more important.

This Rashi dispells the myth that Rashi sought to explain every verse difference.

The Rashi rule is that a *persistent* change in order is significant; contrastively, sporadic change in order indicates equality.

Daily Rashi Grammar Nu29-19b Sat Jul 12, 2014

Background: The Bible is describing the offerings during the 8 days of Succoth. Note the changing language in the verses below

- **Nu29-24** Do according to ordinance;....besides the up offering and its libation
- **Nu29-19** Do according to ordinance; ...besides the up offering and its libations
- **Nu29-31** Do according to ordinance; besides the up offering and ***their*** libations
- **Nu29-33** Do according to ordinances;..besides the up offering and its libation

Note the differences indicated by the bold, italics, underline.

The following beautiful explanation is due to Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch:

Rashi: The plurals, indicated by the terminal *s*, as well the plural *their* vs *its*, points to several libations. Traditionally, the only libation we know is the wine libation mentioned in **Nu15**. However, the text hints that during Succoth we also had another libation, hence the plurality, though we are not told what it is. It was in fact the water libation.

Compare Rav Hirsch's beautiful explanation to Rashi's literal text:

Rashi: *The plural is indicated in the Hebrew by the suffix letters **mem** and **mem** as well as the plural-indicating **yud**. These three letters spell **mem-yud-mem**, the Hebrew word for water showing that there was a water libation on Succoth.*

But why did Rashi ignore Rabbi Hirsch's straightforward grammatical explanation and give a word play? I answer this in my article cited below. Rashi frequently

- *derived* comments grammatically
- *expressed* them by word play.

The real driving force of the Rashi was the grammar. However, Rashi wanted to people to remember the comment; memory is not always aided by logic; it is frequently aided by word play. So the word play Rashi used has the sole purpose of assisting memory while Rashi actually believed in the grammatical explanation which he did not explicitly state (Because it was obvious - everyone knows the plural)

References

Russell Jay Hendel; *Peshat and Derash: A New Intuitive and Analytic Approach*, **Tradition**, 118#4, pp 327-342, 1980.

Daily Rashi Grammar Nu29-19b, Ex20-08 Sun/Mon 7/14/14

Background: Recall the fundamental idea that there are two types of present tense

- Simple present: I am eating an apple
- Habitual present: When I want fruit, I eat apples

This is the difference between them:

- The simple present connotes doing an activity (eating an apple) *once*
- The habitual present connotes *frequent* doing of an activity

There is a habitual past and habitual future. In English, there is no habitual imperative.

With this background we can understand the controversy between Rashi and other grammarians.

- The Hebrew conjugation for the imperative is for example *Zechor* - *remember*.
- Most grammarians translate the form *Zachor* as meaning the same as *Zechor*
- Rashi however translates *Zachor* as the habitual imperative. This is Rashi's genius.

Let us explore this: If

- The Bible said: *Zechor, remember the Sabbath once*, then I would simply have to say Kiddush on Friday evening and remember that it is now Sabbath
- The Bible said: *Zachor, remember frequently the Sabbath*, then everytime I see something good and precious I should designate it for the Sabbath.

This last comment is exactly what Rashi says on **Ex20-08**, *Remember frequently (Zachor) the Sabbath*.

We see from the above that Rashi's conception of **Grammar** is more advanced than his contemporaries or even modern day scholarship.

Rashi makes a similar comment on **Nu29-19b**: *Not Fight (once) the Midyanites but Fight frequently (Tzaror) the Midyanites*. In other words there must be a continual war effort until they are defeated.

APPENDIX

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

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 (Homonims)** 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

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)

IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both

POSSESSiON & MAKING of idols are prohibited

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.

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

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 dont 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)

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

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.

X: SYMBOLISM: EXAMPLE: (Use of puns) (NuXX-XX) 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