

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in LeCh LeChaH
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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 example illustrates derivation of the laws of circumcision which occurs in this week's Parshah. We also explain a very beautiful and deep exegesis

illustrating biblical style.

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Parallelism-Daily Rashi Gn17-10:14 Sun-Sat 10/22-10/28/17

Background: God created a covenant with Abraham. The sign of the covenant is circumcision. The laws governing circumcision occur in **Gn17-10:14**.

Circumcision is also mentioned in **Lv12-03**.

Biblical Text:

(A) This is the covenant you should watch between me and you and your descendants afterwards

(1) for all males (to) be circumcised

(2) Circumcise the uncircumcised flesh

(B) And it will be a sign of a covenant between me and you

(3) An 8-day old will circumcise:

(3a) - All of your males for generations

(3b) - House born &

(3c) - Monetary purchases from any foreigner who is not a descendant of yours

(4) Surely circumcise

- (4b) House born &

- (4c) Monetary purchases

(C) And my covenant will be established in your flesh for an eternal covenant

(5) An uncircumcised male who doesn't circumcise his uncircumcised flesh, his soul shall be cut off from her nation since he desecrated my covenant

- In the above table verses describing
- Laws, are numbered (1,2,3,4,5)
 - Covenants, are letteres (A,B,C)

We now examine the parallelism in the numbered verses (1,2,3,4,5) From each parallelism we infer a law.

(1) *for all males (to) be circumcised*

(2) *Circumcise the uncircumcised flesh*

Note: Rashi inserts the elliptical word (to). Rashi explains that infinitives are always of the form *to be ...* . Rashi similarly explains the grammar of the Hebrew word for the imperative *circumcise* in (2). Rashi explains that the two forms *nemaltem* and *maltem* mean the same thing and that the weak letter *nun* sometimes falls off.

What laws do we learn from here:

(1) The infinitive, *to be circumcised*, implies an ideal case where all Jews are circumcised at 8 days

(2) The command, *circumcise*, implies that if a child was not circumcised, then that child must circumcise himself when he grows up (Rambam, Milah, 1:1).

(3) *An 8-day old will circumcise:*

(3a) - *All of your males for generations*

(3b) - *House born &*

(3c) - *Monetary purchases from any foreigner who is not a descendant of yours*

In this verse we learn *who* must be circumcised (Rashi & Rambam Milah 1,1):

- Jewish children
- A non-Jewish adult slave purchased from any foreign nation who is not a descendant
- A non-Jewish child born to a non-Jewish female slave who is owned by Jews.

Today, through various bankruptcy laws, we no longer have slavery laws. However, in former years when bankruptcy was not a legal option, people who were bankrupt had obligations for life. Very often, to "pay" their debts, the poor people had to sell themselves, hence the institution of slavery. The introduction of bankruptcy laws which have been particularly emphasized by America is a major accomplishment in the legal elimination of the need for slavery.

(3) *An 8-day old will circumcise:*

(3a) - *All of your males for generations*

(3b) - *House born &*

(3c) - *Monetary purchases from any foreigner who is not a descendant of yours*

(4) *Surely circumcise*

- (4b) *House born &*

- (4c) *Monetary purchases*

Comparing (3) and (4) see many things:

- (4) uses the style *surely circumcise*
- (3) mentions *8-day* while (4) does not
- (3) mentions 3 categories (your males, house born and monetary purchases) while (4) mentions only the last two.

We learn laws from each of these.

- From the phrase *surely circumcise* we learn that there has to always be circumcision. The Talmud gives the following example: A person who was circumcised converts; he must still circumcise again because it says *surely circumcise*. In practice, a slight cut is administered, enough to get a drop of blood and this suffices. (Talmud)

- From the absence of *8-day* with the categories *house-born* and *monetary purchases* we learn that there are exceptions to the 8-day rule (Rashi). Interestingly, Rashi does not give the cases but refers to the Tractate Shabbath. Here are two cases mentioned by the Rambam (Rambam, Milah, 1:3-5):

Case 1: If you buy an adult slave then he is circumcised on that day. Furthermore, if you buy an infant new born slave he is circumcised on that day (You don't wait for the 8th day)

Case 2: If you buy a pregnant female slave with her fetus, then her son is circumcised when born since although she is currently *household* the child was bought as a fetus and is therefore he is classified as *monetary purchase*.

To emphasize, if you already owned a female slave, and she gave birth while in your household, then that child is a *house born* and is circumcised on the 8th day.

(5) An uncircumcised male who doesn't circumcise his uncircumcised flesh, his soul shall be cut off from her nation since he desecrated my covenant

From (5) we learn the well-known fact that absence of circumcision at death is punished by a *cut-off* punishment (*cut off from his nation*) (Rashi & Rambam Milah 1:1).

Lv12-02:04

When a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth to a male

-(1) She shall be ritually unclean 7 days ...

- (A) [& On day 8, his uncircumcised flesh shall be circumcised]

- (2) & 33 days she shall stay with her blood pure ...(but she will not touch offerings...)

The last exegetically derived halachah on circumcision is found in the Leviticus passage cited above. Note how verselet (A) is a *parenthetical insert* (an insight first provided by the Malbim). The real text says (1) & (2) that when a woman gives birth to a boy *she shall be unclean 7 days and then sit in purity 33 days*. The fact that her son is circumcised on the 8th day is not a main theme of the paragraph but a parenthetical insert.

But, observes the Malbim, parenthetical inserts are indicated by a lack of "and" (&) at the beginning of the verse. By omitting the "and" the Author signals that the following verse is not *main theme*. Why then does (A) have a leading &.

To understand this we have to 1st study the parallelism brought by the Sifray the official exegetical compilation of laws on certain Torah books from which Rashi frequently derives comments.

Notice the underlined passages above and the lack of parallelism.

- 7 days

- day 8

- 33 days

The Sifray explains that the reversal *day 8* vs. *an 8-day old* (cf. Gn17-12) indicates emphasis on *day*: *Circumcision must be done by day; it should not be done at night*. Such an exegesis is an exegesis on *word sequence*. The Rashi commentaries and certainly modern biblical scholars

sometimes see such a midrashic exegesis as homiletic and without basis. In truth its basis is the deviation from *word sequence*.

To use the Sifray's own language: *I now only know that circumcision done on the 8th day must be done on the daytime. But suppose circumcision was delayed to the 9th or 10th day, for example, for Medical Reasons: Is it required to be done by daytime? Or perhaps, the night of the 9th and 10th is valid for circumcision.*

For this reason the parenthetical insert (A) above is introduced with an &. The & ('and') links the verse to (1) and (2). It emphasizes that the 33-day vs day-8 distinction applies to all times of circumcision and not just to the 8th day. Without the &, I would simply contrast Lv12-03 and Gn17-12

- **Gn17-12** An 8-day old, he shall be circumcised for you, for all generations
- **Lv12-03** On day 8, he will have his uncircumcised flesh circumcised.

However, the & in **Lv12-03** encourages me to contrast **Lv12-03** with **Lv12-02** since although it is parenthetical it is now linked

- 7 days she shall be unclean
- on day 8 he will have his uncircumcised flesh circumcised
- 33 days she shall sit in purity.

Such a contrast says the law of *by day* (for circumcision) applies whenever he is circumcised (See Yevamoth 72b).

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