

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis in VaYaYSheV

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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.

A charming gem today in the Golden Rashi Rambam series: What caused the dispute, almost murder, between Joseph and his brothers? It turns out to be a controversy between the Rashi and Rambam which reflects a controversy between the Talmud Bavli and Midrash Rabbah. Along the way we do learn some important laws codified in the great Mishneh Torah. We also see the Rambam in a light we rarely see him, as a biblical commentator. Finally, I illustrate fundamental ideas in explaining controversy which are useful in understanding Midrash.

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 Daily Rashi Gn37-02b Sunday 12/3/2017
Grammar-Connectives Daily Rashi Gn37-02c Mon 12/4/2017
Meaning-Synonyms Daily Rashi Gn37-02d:e Tue-Thr 12/5-7/17

The Rashis are all on one verse. So we follow the style of the Ralbag in Job: We first explain all words, then the verse and then show the Rashi-Rambam controversy.

Background: The Bible is telling the 'history' of Jacob and starts with a description of Joseph, Jacob's last child.

Biblical:

<i>These are the stories of Joseph</i>	
<i>Joseph was 17 years old</i>	
<i>Apprenticed as a shepard with his brothers</i>	<i>[But] behaved [immaturely] like a child</i>
<i>Behaved immatured <u>with</u></i>	
<i>The children of Bilhah and the children of Zilpah</i>	<i>His father's wives</i>
<i>Joseph brought <u>chatter</u> about them, evil, to his father.</i>	

Rashi:

- **Gn37-02b** (Blue colored): The parallelism shows a contrast: Despite his being 17 years old and given responsibilities, he behaved like a child. Here Rashi uses the **Parallelism** rule as shown above. The justification of the Rashi comment based on **parallelism** comes from the Midrash Rabbah which explicitly notes the contrast: *You say he was 17 years old and yet you call him a child! Rather, it means he behaved like a child-excessive grooming and*

preoccupation with looks.

- **Gn37-02c** (Underlined word *with*): The Hebrew participle *eth* can mean *with*. Hence, the Rashi comment is embedded in our translation. Here Rashi uses the **Connective** rule which we have classified under the Rashi **Grammar** rule (But it could be classified under the **meaning** rule)
- **Gn37-02f**: We know (from context) that the Hebrew *dibbatham*, as well as from its occurrences in many other places in the bible, means some type of talk. My approach to such Rashis is to pick the right English synonym. In this case *chatter* is best. Rashi brings down the verse in Songs *the chattering of the lips of sleepers*. Clearly, people who are sleepy are not talking intelligently but rather, chatting and speaking ad lib. Here Rashi uses the **Synonym** rule, part of the **meaning** rule.
- **Gn37-02e** (Orange colored): Rashi deals with the strange sequence *the chatter of them, evil*. Rashi translates it as *evil chatter on them*. Rashi interprets the phrase as if it was construct. Because of the pronomial suffix (*on them*), this is a bit difficult to see and hence, requires clarification by Rashi.
- **Gn37-02d** (Orange colored): Rashi, apparently out of nowhere, states the following: *Joseph brought evil chatter on his brothers. He told his father that i) they ate from living animals, ii) were suspect on adultery and iii) belittled the children of the concubines by calling them slaves. And for this he was punished. For accusing them of adultery he was attacked by Potiphar his master's wife who tried to seduce him; for accusing them of calling the sons of the concubines slaves, he was sold into slavery. As to the accusation of the eating live from animals, we find that when his brothers sold him they slaughtered a sheep to drench his coat in blood. Thus, the brothers follows slaughter procedures.*

Quite remarkable. Rashi's comments (which come from the Genesis Rabbah) seem to come out of nowhere. It is comments like this that motivate people to say that Rashi and Midrash engaged in homily, that they were not always the straightforward meaning of a verse.

But the position of the **Rashi Newsletter** is that Rashi is always rule-based and never sermonizing. To fully appreciate this Rashi we will spend the rest of the posting. Note in particular, that Rashi is dealing in his comment with a problem: Why did Joseph and his brothers fight to the extent that they tried to kill him? Let us go over this leisurely.

SUNDAY

The Rambam, citing the Talmud Bavli, Shabbath 10, explains the *mistake* Jacob made with his children. Rambam codifies the lack of this mistake into law. Here Rambam follows the practice of deriving laws not only from biblical imperatives but also from biblical stories.

Rambam, *Laws of Inheritance (Nachaloth) 6:13* states: *The sages commanded that people should not distinguish between children during his lifetime, even is small matter, so that they should not get to a state of jealousy and dispute like Joseph's brothers with Joseph.*

Thus, the Rambam clearly states that the special multi-colored coat that Jacob gave Joseph caused the jealousy and disputes that arose between Joseph and his brothers.

Here, Rambam is supported by an explicit verse: **Gn37-03:04** *...his father made for him a striped coat, His brothers saw that he was liked by their father more than the other brothers: They hated his and could not speak peacefully with him.*

But as we just saw above, Rashi holds that the evil chatter of Joseph caused him his problems. Thus, we have a controversy between Rashi and Rambam. This controversy in turn reflects a controversy between the Talmud Bavli and Midrash Rabbah.

MONDAY

To better understand Rashi we now examine the accusations that Joseph accused his brothers of. Most interestingly, Rashi deviates from the Genesis Rabbah

- Genesis Rabbah on **Gn37-02**: Joseph accused his brothers of eyeing the Canaanite women
- Rashi on **Gn37-02**: Joseph accused his brothers of being suspect on adultery.

To understand the Genesis Rabbah I used the Rashi method of **Other Verses** or **Citations** or **References**: **Gn38-02** explicitly says that *Judah*

- *Saw there the daughter of a Canaanite*
- *He took her (i.e. married her)*
- *He came to her*

Thus, we have an explicit statement that Judah chose his women by virtue of

eyeing them out irrespective of their origin. Note, although this was prior to the giving of the Torah the Bible goes out of its way to emphasize that Canaanite women were "off limits" to the descendants of the Patriarchs and indeed both Eliezer, Jacob and even Esau sought out non-Canaanite women (Gn28-01:09)

So the Genesis Rabbah definitely had a basis for saying that Joseph accused his brothers (at least Judah) of eyeing Canaanite women.

TUESDAY

But why did Rashi change the accusation to being suspect on adultery? Here too we can find an explicit verse. We again use the **reference** method. **Gn38-15:16** explicitly states that Judah eyed a woman with a veil and requested intimacy from her. Several things can be inferred from her

- First: Judah treated people like objects. His interest in women whose face he could not see shows that he didn't care at all about who they were or their personality. This is consistent with him marrying a Canaanite woman.
- Second: If Judah selected women who were veiled, then it is reasonable he might select a married woman. Hence, the Rashi that Joseph accused his brothers of being suspect on adultery.

We needn't be loud. We needn't assume that Joseph outright accused anyone of anything. Typical chatters between his and his father might have been as follows: "You know I see Judah eyeing woman all the time even Canaanite women and even women with veils. How does he know whom he is getting involved with."

To clinch this argument note that the veiled woman was non other than his daughter-in-law. And when he ordered her executed she answered him by pointing out that it was his own fault for never checking things and only caring about people as objects.

WEDNESDAY

Rashi, following the Genesis Rabbah, also accused the brothers of calling the children of the concubines slaves. This is easy to justify. Go back to the top of this digest. The green shaded part of **Gn37-02** reads as follows

<i>Behaved immaturely <u>with</u></i>	
<i>The children of Bilhah and the children of Zilpah</i>	<i>His father's wives</i>

Aha! Bilhah and Zilpah were not *is father's wives*. In fact, they were concubines. The Bible goes out of its way to call them *wives* by way of contrast. Some of the brothers regarded the sons of the wives-Rachel and Leah-as true children while the

sons of the concubines were the sons of maidservants (the equivalent of slaves).

Thus, Rashi makes his inference based on **Parallelism**. The verse contrastively calls Bilhah and Zilpah *wives* when in fact they were concubines thus showing a certain tension.

THURSDAY

The third and final accusation was that the brothers were suspect on eating animals alive. This too is based on the **parallelism**. If you go back to the top of this digest the blue shaded part of **Gn37-02** reads as follows:

<i>Joseph was 17 years old</i>	
<i>Apprenticed as a shepard with his brothers</i>	<i>[But] behaved [immaturely] like a child</i>

We already explained that the Midrash and Rashi exploit the contrast: *17 years old* but a *child*. The Midrash emphasizes that it is not so much the word *naar* which could mean *lad* or *child* but rather, the contrastive parallelism of *17 years old* but *child* that motivates translating *child* as *behaving like a child*.

But look at the verse. Behaving like a child is contrasted to *two* things: i) 17 years old and ii) apprenticed with his brothers. Rashi therefore assumes that although he was treated with respect-"You will apprentice yourself to your brothers so you can learn the shepard business"-he behaved like a child there. He undoubtedly doubted his brothers behavior and suspected them of some behaving like shepards. Shepards typically live by themselves outside of society. There is no one to look after them. Hence, a sort of jungle law applies.

Interestingly, Rambam *Theft 6:1* makes it clear that the *general shepard is suspect on stealing* (since no one looks after them) *and therefore one cannot take certain types of gifts from shepards since they are presumed stolen!!*

As to the eating animals live, again, we need not exaggerate. Shepards are typically physically active in arid places. If they are overwhelmed with hunger it might be convenient to simply cut off a leg from a lamb (without killing the lamb) and cook it ("leg of lamb"). I do not know if such practices were rampant but the main point of the verse is that Joseph was immature in his apprenticeship suspecting his brothers of improper behavior instead of trying to learn, as an apprentice from them.

Here again, Rashi was not being sermonic. He was basing himself on the might **Parallelism** method. One should carefully inspect the blue part of the table and convince oneself that the verse would read fine without the phrase about

apprenticeship. The verse put the phrase in there and placed it there contrastive to Joseph behaving like a child to emphasize that contrast and what it implies.

FRIDAY

We have explained the Rashi. We have also explained the Rambam. What now? Do we simply list this as a controversy?

No!

For a controversy to be real it must reflect each side explaining the verse support of the other side. But clearly Rashi must acknowledge the explicit verse which says that Jacob's favoritism caused the hatred. Similarly, Rambam was simply citing the Talmud in Sabbath. He was not giving an exhaustive discussion on the verse.

For these reason-since there are two verses-I would suggest that Rambam and Rashi, or the Talmud Bavli and Genesis Rabbah, do not disagree but rather, complement each other.

The problems in Jacob's family started because Jacob showed favoritism to one child. However, these problems became exasperated because of Joseph's immaturity and slander. It was his slander that sealed the hatred and made it unresolvable.

Do not be surprised at this solution for we find that slander *sealed* fates. Thus, Adam and Eve were thrown out of paradise because they accepted slander about God from the snake. Similarly, although the Jews sinned multiple times their fate was only sealed when they believed the slander on God's gift, Israel, from the spies.

SATURDAY

I hoped you enjoyed this week's posting. I would consider it a model of how to learn controversy and emotional Rashis. Remember, all Rashis are based on grammatical rules. Also remember, that controversies may be complementary. These two principles should not depart from your vision as you read biblical commentaries since they are fundamental and deep in understanding all Midrash.

Praise be Him who chose them and their learning!

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

