

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in TeZaVeH
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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 our exploration of commandments in each parshah. Actually, we review today some attitudes that are so important that they are mentioned in Jewish Law books.

We continue a Rashi from last week since one of the supporting verses is in fact in this week's Parshah. Someone who teaches Rashi in Hawaii asked me why this Midrash is mentioned so often. So, I checked some of the places it occurs and have more tables to add. This gives a richer understanding to what we did last week.

In passing: I use to get a few questions a month but things have dropped off lately. Please feel free to ask questions. I will answer them anonymously or give attribution.

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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**Database *Rashi NewsLetter* Ex25-11b, Ex25-24a,
Ex30-03b Thur-Sat Feb 22-24, 2018**

Background: The following Rashi illustrates the Rashi **Database Method**. The **Database** method roughly consists of asking for some attribute among a collection of verses.

Here

- The *collection of verses* are all verses describing Temple utensils
- The *attribute* is the presence of a *golden crown*.

The results of the Database query are presented in the table below. Rashi's comments are discussed afterwards.

Biblical Text

Utensil	Paragraph	Verse Stating <i>Make on this utensil a golden crown around it</i>	Utensil is symbolic of
The Temple Torah Ark	Ex25-10:12	Ex25-10	Ark=Ark of Torah = learning =scholars
The Temple Table	Ex25-23:28	Ex25-24	Table = Physical necessities (Wealthy or powerful people)
The Temple Golden altar	Ex30-01:10	Ex30-03	Golden altar = Offerings = Priesthood

Rashi Text: The Rashi text is summarized in the above table. First, just to be clear, although there are many other Temple utensils, the *Ark, Table, and Golden Altar*, are the only utensils that had golden crowns.

Rashi points out that these three Temple utensils correspond to three professions

- Torah Ark = Torah Scholars
- Table = Wealthy and Powerful (royal) people
- Altar = Priesthood.

The Rambam in his Mishneh Torah (Laws of Talmud Torah) actually cites this Midrash and introduces a *Torah/Jewish attitude* that is part of Jewish law. *There are three crowns (positions of honor) attainable by Jews: Scholarship honor, Royal honor and Priestly honor. Although the Priestly and Royal honors exclusively belong to the priests and House of David, the Scholarship honor is available to anyone who wants it and is willing to place the effort.*

Thus, the Rambam codifies this Midrash as giving a *promise* of encouragement and success to anyone who wishes to be honored as a Torah scholar. This important motivational promise is to prevent aspiring scholars from giving up.

The interplay here between Law, Psychology and Midrash is very interesting and revealing.

WHAT IS NEW THIS WEEK

As mentioned someone who teaches Rashi in Hawaii asked me about the multiple occurrences of this Midrash.

You can find a list in the Mesoreth Hashas commentary on Midrash Rabbah. Here are the places where the Midrash, *There are three crowns is mentioned*.

- Tractate Yuma 72b
- Exodus Rabbah 34:2
- Bamidbar Rabbah 4:13
- Koheleth Rabbah 7:2
- Pirkey Avoth 4
- Avoth DeRabbi Nathan 41
- Midrash Shmuel 23
- Midrash Tanchuma Vayakhel 8
- Midrash Yalkut Koheleth 973

Impressive. My teacher, the Rav, Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchick, once said *Just as people have luck (Mazal) so do Talmudic statements have luck. Some Talmudic statements are mentioned once and yet give rise to many commentaries and books.*

It is interesting the difference in approach between the Biblical Scholar and a Midrashist like myself. The

Biblical Scholar, is interested in minor changes of words; they might be interested in the "setting" or time when the Midrash is said. Contrastively, the Midrashist is interested in the Rashi Methods that generated the rule. As I studied the sources above I found two gems using the Rashi **Database** method. Let us examine.

Review: Last week we noted that a Database inquiry on the Temple utensils shows that only 3 of them had golden crowns:

- The Ark - corresponding to Torah scholarship; the ark carried the Torah
- The Golden incense altar - corresponding to the Priesthood
- The Temple Table - corresponding to royalty and riches.

The Midrash continues with the following statement:

- *The Crown of Priesthood was taken by Aaron*
- *The Crown of Royalty was taken by the house of David*
- *The Crown of Torah is open to anyone who wants it*

Fancy and moving. But is there a Rashi method that

justifies this statement. It turns out the Exodus Rabbah 34:2 explicitly uses the Database and Grammatical method. It compares the commands to make utensils. See for yourself

Utensil	Verse	Command to make utensil	Command to make an ark
Ark	Ex25-10	Plural you	Make an ark
Ark carrying poles	Ex25-13	Singular you	Make poles
Ark cover	Ex25-17	Singular you	Make an ark cover
Kerubim	Ex25-18	Singular you	Make Kerubim
Table	Ex25-23	Singular you	Make a table
Candelabrah	Ex25-31	Singular you	Make a candelabrah
Temple	Ex26-01	Singular you will	Make a Temple

The Exodus Rabbah is very explicit in using the **Database** and **Grammar** method. *Why is it in all utensils the command is in the singular (you) while in the ark the command is in the plural (you). To teach you, that specific individuals acquired the crown of Priesthood and royalty-richness but anyone (plural) can achieve the Crown of Torah.*

This very important principle, that Torah Crownship is equally accessible to all Jews is brought down in the Pirkey Avoth Braithah Chapter 4 and codified as law by the Rambam and later the Shulchan Aruch. It is important to emphasize that this rule was not just a *nice thought* but rather was grammatically derived by a database

comparison.

We go further in the Midrash which state that there are three crowns and that the crown of Torah is accessible to all. The Midrash continues: *Perhaps you think that because the Crown of Torah is accessible to all, it is not as important as the other Crowns. Not so! On the contrary, the Crown of Torah surpasses the Crown of Priesthood and the Crown of Royalty.*

Again, there is this temptation to seek of the Midrash as sermonizing, saying something deep and profound which however is not intrinsic to the text. Not so! The Rashi and Midrash Rabbah are always justifiable with use of the Rashi methods. In this particular case, the justification is found in the Numbers Rabbah Midrash, 4:13. Again the deep **Database** method is used. The Midrash asks a simple **Database** inquiry: Among Temple utensils, with what cloths were they covered when the Temple was disassembled and the Jews went on journeying. See for yourself

Utensil	Verse	Covering for journeys
Ark	Nu-04:05-06	<i>Completely Sky-blue</i> cloth on seals
Table	Nu04-07:08	Sealskin on <i>sky-blue</i> cloth
Candelabrah	Nu04-09:10	Sealskin on <i>sky-lue</i> cloth
Golden Altar	Nu04-11:12	Sealskin on <i>sky-blue</i> cloth
Copper Altar	Nu04-13:14	Sealskin on purple cloth

The Midrash notes that in the ark the sealskin was placed on the utensil and on the very top a sky blue cloth was placed while in the other utensils the order is reversed with the sealskin on the very top and the sky-blue cloth on bottom.

The Midrash goes a step further: *The adjective completely (completely sky blue) only occurs by the ark*

Before citing the Midrashic explanation I add from my own analysis, the nature of sealskin (*tachash*). Sealskin was used to create shoes. Apparently, it was a tough substance like leather that could withstand the elements. The biblical root of sealskin means *to go quickly* and apparently sealskin shoes (like leather shoes today) protected feet against the elements and enabled you to go quickly.

The Midrash in many places explains that *sky-blue* as the English translation implies is the color reminiscent of heaven and heaven is reminiscent of God.

The Bamidbar Rabbah now explains: *The other utensils had a godly element in them (sky blue) but they also had earthly elements in them. The Table, symbolizing wealth and the Incense Altar symbolizing the Priesthood had elements of the material and divine. Hence the sky blue*

cloth was placed on the utensil to signify its divinity but a sealskin cloth was placed on the very top to protect it from the elements.

Not so the ark! The Ark, carrying the Torah, symbolizing Torah scholars who carry the Torah, was completely heavenly. Heaven needs no protection against the elements since it is above them. On the contrary, the Divinity of Torah protects the sealskin protection beneath it.

The Midrash concludes that the Torah Crown is the most important crown since it totally resembles the Divine and heavenly while the Table, Candelabrah and Altar, while having elements of the Divine also had vulnerabilities in this world.

This then is the source of the Midrashic statement that the Torah Crown is the most important of the three crowns.

We hope you enjoyed this intensive analysis of these alternate sources. For one thing, they show how even the most sermonic of ideas may have a root in the text. We also show how this 3-crown midrash although embodying attitudes is so important that it is codified in law.

Again, we invite all readers to submit Rashi questions. Answers will be posted anonymously unless you request

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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