

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in BaLaQ
Vol. 29#15 - Adapted from Rashi-is-Simple

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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 year I am focusing on the presence of Jewish Law in verses and Rashi.

*We take a vacation today (from halachah) and discuss how Rashi understood poetry. The poetry from today's Parshah has entered our daily prayers. Fundamental to understanding Biblical Poetry is Parallelism. The modern approach to Parallelism was presented in David Kugel's beautiful book, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History*. I routinely recommend that all involved in biblical study including synagogue Rabbis read this book (it is very readable and it is Kosher in its views)*

I will attempt to send out the Parshah over a week in advance.

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-Grammar Daily Rashi Nu24-05a,b,c Thur-Sat
6/27-30/18**

Background: Nu24-05:09 presents Bilam's beautiful praise of the Jewish people. We start with Nu24-05 and study it using parallelism.

Biblical Text: Nu24-05

How good are:

- *Your houses, Jacob.*
- *Your Temples, Israel*

Contribution of Rashi Newsletter and Rashi Text: First, we explain the **Parallelism** Method. What does it mean to say that the above verse is written in **Parallelism**?

Well, the key to **Parallelism** is repetition with added nuances. Let us examine these two components *repetition* and *added nuances*.

The first clause of the verse *your houses Jacob* sounds a lot like the second clause of the verse *your Temples Israel*. For example, everyone would agree that *Jacob, Israel* are synonyms. There is a subtle different in that *Jacob* is typically used to describe the Jewish people in exile while *Israel* is used to describe the Jewish people when they occupy their own land.

Houses and *Temples* are a lot like *day-night*. *Day-night* are two components of a spectrum of time. Similarly, *house-temple* are two components of *places of regular gathering of people for non-commercial (for experiential) effects*.

So, one important ingredient of **Parallelism** is repetition either using synonyms or complementary pairs.

Kugel, in his beautiful book, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* made the important contribution that **Parallelism** has a second ingredient, *climaxed nuance*. Kugel explains that **Parallelism** is not just repetition but repetition with added emphasis. Many people do not fully grasp Kugel's approach; using it Kugel was able to explain many difficult verses.

Kugel's idea is simply stated: *The 2nd repetition must add something to the first of the repetitions*. Let us examine this. Using our verse

Jacob, Israel: Recall that *Jacob* refers to Israel in exile while *Israel* refers to Israel in power. So, the poetry says

- There is a beauty and simplicity in *Jacob in exile*. Indeed, even the worse anti-Semites who killed us, said they saw something different in Jewish houses, a certain sense of holiness and simplicity.
- And even when *Israel is in power* it still retains its beauty and simplicity.

Houses-Temples:

- One comes into a Jewish *house* and sees beauty and harmony.
- And even in their *Temples*, one still sees beauty and harmony.

So much for the Parnellism. We have left to explain why I translated the verse the way I did and explain Rashi's comments.

I translated *ohalecha*, *tents*, as *houses*, and *mishkenothachah*, *dwelling places*, as, *Temples*. Why?

Because the word *tent* to a biblical person has the same nuances as the word *house* to a modern person. Therefore, *house* is the proper translation since it reflects how the word is heard.

The word *mishkan* refers to the Temple (that is its plain meaning) as we find in **Ex38-21**.

Thus, the simple meaning of the text is how good (beautiful, simple, orderly,) are the houses and Temples of the Jewish people.

Rashi, startlingly, says the goodness of the houses refers to *their doors not directly opposite to each other thus creating necessary privacy*.

The Rashi Newsletter has two contributions to this. First, in my first article on Rashi, *Peshat and Derash*, Tradition 1980, I explain that Rashi sometimes gives an archetypical example, a good example. His intention is not to *exhaust* the meaning of the verse in this punchy example but rather to *illustrate* the wealth of meaning of the verse in this punchy example.

The second point is a famous trick of the Rashi Newsletter. Nowhere in the verse is their mention of privacy and separate spaces. True Rashi is giving an illustrative example but there must be something more. Why pick an illustration not mentioned in the verse?

The famous trick of the Rashi Newsletter is to use the **Other Verse** method. The very next verse mentions that the Jewish people in their campings look like i) gardens, ii) aloe trees, iii) cedar trees. Each of these three are examples of groups with each unit having its own space. For example, two gardens would not be comingled together; each one is separate with its own distinctive flowers. Therefore, Rashi used this **Other Verse** to illuminate *what* is good about Jewish houses; their modesty, separate space, and sense of distinctness. Of course, you the reader are free to add additional *goodness Jewish houses and Temples* especially as this goodness relates to the comparisons of aloes, gardens, cedars, and long streams.

Finally, Rashi discusses the meaning of *Temples*. Rashi points out that the Aramaic translation translates the Hebrew word as *campings*. But the Hebrew word *mishkenothach* is never in the Bible used to indicate campings.

Rashi however was using the **Grammar** method to address the plural *Temples*. What *Temples*?

Rashi gives two explanations. He notes that prophetically, there were several Temples such as the ones in the i) wilderness, ii) city of Nov, iii) city of Shiloh, iv) two Temples in Jerusalem.

His second explanation speaks about *Temples that were destroyed*. Rashi clarifies that a destroyed Temple creates such sadness and guilt in the people that they repent; in other words, the destroyed temple atones just as the offerings of the real Temple atone.

I would however explain *Temples when destroyed* to refer to Synagogues. Rav Hirsch notes that the Synagogue is not a post-Temple phenomena after the Temple destruction. Rather even while there were Temples and even in the Wilderness there were Synagogues where

people prayed in Synchronization with the Offerings in the Temple; in this way, the entire nation could unify around the Temple offerings by praying at the same time.

Let us recap the entire verse:

How good [beautiful, orderly, distinct, like separate gardens] *are your*

- *Houses, Jacob in exile* [and even]
- *Temples* [Actual Temple and Synagogues or Actual and Destroyed Temples], *Israel* [even in power they retain their beauty and simplicity].

Parallelism-Grammar (Puns)- Meaning (Synecdoche-Metonymy)
Daily Rashi Nu24-06a,b,c,d Sun-Wed 7/1-4/18

Background: We just saw the opening, first verse of Bilam's poetry: *How good* [orderly, distinct, separate] *are your houses, Jacob* [in exile], *your Temples, Israel*. We already hinted that the idea of modesty, each person with his/her own space is hinted at in this verse. Let us now examine it. The process will be the same as before. In fact, the referent of this verse are the houses and Temples just mentioned.

Biblical Text:

- [They, the *houses, temples* are] *Like stretched streams,*
- *Like gardens on a river*
- *Like God-planted* [Paradisial] *Aloes*
- *Like Cedars on water.*

Contribution of Rashi and Rashi Newsletter: Again, we use the methods of Kugel which teaches that Parallelism requires the two components of *nuanced repetition*.

The first two bullets have the following *climaxing repetition*

- *Like streams, and even more so*
- *Like rivers with gardens.*

We see two climaxes here

- stream-river
- water-body, water-body with gardens

There is a 3rd climax:

- Quantitative: *Stretched* river
- Qualitative: *Gardened* river.

We see the power of Kugel's approach to **Parallelism** which is not universally understood. The idea that the Jews look like a river is *developed* in three climaxes: *stream-river, water-body gardened water-body, and quantitative-qualitative.*

Let us now look at the second two bullets

- *Like paradisial aloes*
- *Like cedars on water*

The climax should be clear here.

- *Aloes* are known for their invigorating scent
- *Cedars* are known for their strength and throughout the bible are used for construction.

So, we have a beauty-strength climax.

We have already in the previous verse pointed out how Rashi obtains from these 4 comparisons- *stretched stream, gardened river, aloes, Cedars*- the idea of distinctness, each person in each household and Temple has their own space and own distinctness.

Just to recap, the previous analysis has used Kugel's basic approach of Parallelism as *nuanced climaxing repetition*. Now let us see what Rashi says.

- **Parallelism method:** Rashi explicitly mentions that *stretched streams* indicate quantitiveness, a *big* river. This contrasts with the qualitiveness of the next phrase, *gardened rivers*, which indicates a *beautiful* river.
- **Meaning Method:** Rashi explains that *Ahalim* refers to Aloes. Note: Rashi explained this because there is a hidden pun here. The verse compares *houses* (ohalim) to *aloes* (ahalim). This is subtle and therefore Rashi uses the **meaning method** by citing an other verse.
- **Meaning-Synecdoche:** We have translated this phrase as *paradisial* Aloes. The verse literally says *God-planted Aloes*. Rashi does not explain why *God-planted* means *paradisial*. Rashi does not give his reasons. One possible reason is that if we search the Bible we only find God planting in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise (**Gen02-08:09**). However, a deeper reason is a universal method in meaning, **Synecdoche-Metonymy**. This principle states that something can be named by a *good example of it*. The simplest illustration of this principle is using *honey* to name and refer to any *sweet*. So, *planted by God* metonymically refer to *Paradise*.
- **Grammar-Pun Method:** There are remarks in Rashi that *Ahalim* (Aloes) remarkably looks like *Ohalim* (tents-houses). Rashi elaborates on this coincidence. Rashi shows that just as the verb *plant* can be used with Aloes, so too it can be used with *tents-houses*. Rashi shows this by citing other verses where *plant* is used with *tent*. There is a parenthetical comment in some Rashi texts saying that this is incorrect since Ahalim is stated not Ohalim. As is well known, a parenthetical comment in Rashi, means that it is not found in all Rashi texts and is likely put in by an editor to clarify it. Thus, let us ignore the parenthetical. Why did Rashi talk about *Ahalim-Ohalim* as both being plantable? The Rashi Newsletter argues that Rashi uses the

Grammar-pun method. The Parallelism of poetry is enhanced with puns. We also point out another pun in this set of verses since the biblical verb for *stretched* and *planted* sound the same. (Rashi however does not mention this).

- We omitted one Rashi comment where Rashi cites the Talmud who uses Psychoanalytic methods on the Poetry: *Bilam blessed the Jews that they should be stretched; he probably wanted to curse them that they should be flung to far-away places but God forced him to change his curse to blessing them that they look like a far-away stretched stream. From his blessing you can see what his intended curse is.* However interesting this psychological insight is we have confined ourselves to the poetic aspects of the passage

We believe that a person studying this posting will better understand biblical Poetry and better understand the interaction between biblical poetry and Rashi

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHIRULE

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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 **POSSESS**ion & **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