

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in VaEthChaNaN
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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.

A Special treat today. We use Rashi to explain the famous controversy between the Chasidic and Mithnagdim movement. In fact, as we shall show, almost knows what they disagreed on. We show that both movements agreed that the fundamental law in Judaism is Talmud Torah, learning. Surprised? Then read today's issue. It will give you a deeper understanding of the controversy. I will also show that the Rambam sided with the Chasidim (as I have defined them).

Enjoy

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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Questions and Answers.

As a result of our survey I have resurrected the Q&A section of the Newsletter. Below please find an inquiry and the Rashi Newsletter response.

QUESTION

On Gn18-09, *The angels said to Abraham: "Where is Sarah your wife," and he said, "behold, in the tent*, Rashi states, *the underlined words show that Sarah was modest*. How does Rashi learn this.

A second part of the question is as follows: I read that someone derives this from the word *behold* which seems to indicate an emphasis: Not just *she is in the tent*, but an emphasis that *she deliberately stays in the tent out of modesty*.

RESPONSE OF THE RASHIYOMI NEWSLETTER

Very often a Rashi appears difficult because its source is in an **Other Verse**. Thus, the student scrutinizes the current verse with a microscope and tries to derive things in an obscure manner from verse words. The attempt to derive the Rashi from *behold* illustrates this. In such a case a remarkably simple solution may come by using the **Other Verse** method.

In this case the source of the Rashi comment comes in the next verse! *The angels said to him, "I will definitely return to you on this date a year from now and behold Sarah will have a boy;" Sarah was listening at the door of the tent and he was behind*

him.

Quite simply, what do the underlined words he was behind him mean? It shows us a configuration as follows

Sarah in tent ----- Abraham in back of angel---Angels eating

So, the angels back was to the tent and furthermore Abraham stood between the angel and Sarah; ergo, Abraham wanted to make sure that passerbys did not see her and make a comment on how attractive their hostess was; hence the Rashi comment *Sarah was modest.*

Note the remarkable simplicity of this explanation. While the classical Rashi commentators do not give this explanation, they explain *why* Sarah's modesty was brought up by the angels: *To encourage the birth of a child the angels reminded Abraham how modest and religious his wife was.*

What about the word *behold*? A careful look at the Bible shows us that *behold* never is used for emphasis but rather for *readiness*. The word *behold* means what is spoken about afterwards is completely ready without further need of preparation. For example, when Moses brings the plagues on Pharoh he says, *behold I will smite with my rod in my hand on the Nile waters and they will become blood*. The word *behold* here simply denotes complete preparation, that all is ready and all that is necessary is Moses smiting the Nile.

Please feel free to ask questions on particular Rashis. Send inquiries to Rashiyomi@GMail.com. All questions are posted anonymously unless otherwise indicated.

Rabbi Ishmael - Synonyms - Other Verses *Daily Rashi* Dt06-5a,6a,7a,8a,b *Wed-Sun 7/25/2018-7/29/2018*

Background: Dt06-04:09 is the famous *Shma* prayer that is recited twice daily by all Jews.

Biblical Text:

Listen Jews: God is our Lord; God shall be the one God of the world

- General: Love^a God your Lord with all your hearts, all your soul, and all your possessions.
- Particular-Details: *These words, that I command you today, shall be memorized^b by you [on your heart]*
- Particular-Details: Sharply^c communicate them to your students; speak about them while at home, while strolling, at the time of sleeping, at the time of getting up
- Particular-Details: Bind them as symbols on your hand^d; make them as trinkets between your eyes^e.
- Particular-Details: Write them on the doorpost(s) of your houses and gates.

Rashi Text: We first list the five Rashis which we have underlined and indicated with the superscripts a-e and

then explain them

- a) *Love* is contrastive to obedience or *fear*. Commandments must be done out of love and enjoyment rather than as a sense of duty or from fear of punishment.
- b) *How do you love God? By [Talmud Torah] learning and memorizing the rules*
- c) *How do you memorize? By being able to recite them sharply and tersely.*
- d,e) This refers to the *hand* and *head* tefillin which are worn on the *hand* and *head*.

Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter: Some of these Rashi explanations are easy to explain using our 10 Rashiyomi rules.

- d,e) This uses the **Other Verse** method since the Bible explicitly state that Tefillin are worn on the hand and head (e.g. Ex13-09)
- c) This uses the **Meaning-Synonym** method. *To sharp* is a synonym of *to communicate*. It means to communicate in a sharp, brief, concise manner.
- a-c) To explain the relationships of Rashis a-c) we must explain the very beautiful Rabbi Ishmael style rules. The bible is based on case studies. So, whenever you

see a verse you generalize it. For example, Dt25-04 prohibits muzzling an ox while it is threshing. The generalization rule says it is equally prohibited to muzzle any animal while doing its work (So if you own a dog sled in Alaska, you cannot muzzle the dogs to prevent them from eating while dragging the sled!)

But if all verses should be generalized, how do you get particular? You use a **general - particular** style. For example, (Nu05-12:13) *When* [General] *a woman trespasses her marriage and* [particular] *sleeps with a man.* There are lots of ways for a woman to *trespass* her marriage. Using the **Generalization** principle, I would say that the laws of Nu05 apply to any such Generalization. By using a **General-Particular** (Detail) style the Bible makes clear that Nu05 only addresses the case when a woman trespasses her marriage by committing adultery. Notice the subtlety: If the bible had simply said *when a woman sleeps with a man* then I would be justified in Generalizing this to any trespass even if not as serious. By using the General-Particular style the Bible limits the laws of Nu05 to a particular case.

Now let us return to Dt06. If the Bible simply said *love God* then *any* method of loving God would be acceptable. By using a General-Particular style, *love God, memorize his laws* the Bible is indicating that the exclusive way of loving God is through learning.

This sounds counterintuitive (even though it is derived from the text). So, let me clarify it emotionally. Love is normally associated with a high. For example, when a woman nurses her child she experiences certain positive emotions. Similar comments apply to eating and other physical pleasures. So how do you get high on God. The Bible answers, *By memorizing his laws till you can repeat them sharply, quickly and effortlessly.* As we know, such an act of memorizing to mastery releases endorphins which give one a sense of highness.

Now let us continue: We have used the Rabbi Ishmael Style rule of **General-Particular**, to show that God is loved by memorizing his law. But how do you memorize. Again, we use the General-Particular Rabbi Ishmael style rule to explain that memorization is done by *sharp memorization* where as Rashi says, *if a person asks you, you don't have to stall or hesitate but can immediately recite the laws in a sharp concise manner.*

The Chasidic-Mithnaged Controversy: We have left to explain one thing. We have stated above that *Talmud Torah, learning the law, memorizing sharply the law*, is the fundamental way to love God. In passing, the Rambam in the laws of Shma says the same thing. *It is a positive commandment to say the shma every day since it contains many important principles such as God's*

unity...and Talmud Torah, learning, which is the main thing.

But does everyone agree with this? The popular misconception is that the Chasidus arose as a rebellion as a learning-centered Judaism. Chasidus, we are told emphasized performance of commandments as a means of loving God.

So, we now answer this apparent controversy. Returning to the *shma* paragraph cited above, we see some extra verses. In fact, we see

- *Love God* [How?]
- *Memorize the law* [How?]
- *Sharply memorize* [How?]
- *Perform commandments such as wearing tefillin.*

Let us think about this carefully. There are two types of learning

- **Experiential learning:** Where I memorize things I practice and on which I have hands-on experience. For example, if I wear tefillin every day, I must know all types of law such as the fact that the head tefillin is on top of the head midway between the eyes; tefillin have to be black; the tefillin is worn using 7 wraps around the arm; the hand tefillin have a small knot resembling the letter **yud** which with the **Shin** on the head tefillin

and the **Daleth** knot in the head tefillin spell **Shin-Daleth-Yud, Shaddai**, the name of God.

- Abstract learning: For example, if I learn the laws of Temple offerings, I am learning something that to me is abstract since I have never seen an altar fire or how blood can be sprinkled on the altar. The learning is divorced from personal experience.

Using this elementary distinction, we can now reformulate the Mithnaged-Chasidic controversy as follows: *Both Mithnagdim and Chasidim acknowledge that the Learning of the Law, its memorization and sharp mastery, is the means of loving God. Indeed, how could they not acknowledge this when in fact this is explicitly stated in a verse and reflects the General-Particular style used throughout the Bible. However, they differ in what type of learning to emphasize*

- *Chasidus emphasizes learning commandments you actually perform. If you wear tefillin you know all types of laws (blackness, squareness, the yud, the 7 wraps etc.). Similarly, if you eat frequently you know all the laws of saying grace after meals (how 3 males join in the pre-grace invitation; how much must be eaten etc.).*
- *Mithnagdus emphasizes any type of learning even abstract learning where we have no experiential basis.*

What Chasidus did was to identify why Mithnagdus was

possessed by only 5% of Jews; because it was not hands-on and experienced basis. By introducing experienced based learning, the Chasidic movement hoped to get the other 95% of Jewry involved in what Maimonides calls *the main principle*, Talmud Torah, learning.

Who is right? Chasidus or Mithnagdus? The Rambam, the so-called arch-rationalist, decides in at least two places in favor of Chasidus. In his great introduction to the commentary on the Mishnah, the order of Temple Holy Things, Maimonides *explicitly* says, *and even great leaders of Talmudic academies do not know these laws well because there is no experience to tie them to*. Furthermore, Maimonides explains that he began his *magnus opum*, his Code of Jewish Law, the Mishneh Torah, with the daily mitzvot such as holidays, tzitzit, etc. Why? *Because people know these laws from their experience; therefore I have begun the code with these laws*.

From a secular point of view, modern pedagogy thinks it superior to teach a course using hands-on experience. Hence, the so called abstract subjects such as physics and mathematics are being approached these days using projects and hands-on experiences.

I believe the approach presented above explains the real intent behind the Chasidic movement. It also shows the importance of Talmud Torah, sharp memorization of laws, in entering a state of love with God.

Praise be Him who Chose Them and Their Learning!

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 (egg Dt34-10a) egg 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)** *Marchese* means pot; *Machinate* 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 Candelabras means COMING(Gn46-26a)

EXAMPLE: Whiptail conjugation has different rules if 1st root letter is Trade (Gn44-16a)

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IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Don't **POSSESS** the gods of others Don't **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) *Don't MUZZLE an OX while THRESHING* RASHI: Don't 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