

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in ShoFeTiM
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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. Although we do not directly review Rashis, we review the Biblical source for equality of men and women. Many people are unaware that the idea that men and women are equal dates back to the Bible. The Talmudic era witnessed Rabbinic application of this principle in ways that surpass even modern law. For example, Talmudic Law believes in reverse discrimination, giving women precedence to men in courtroom appearance. There are many other examples of women achieving more equality than they do today.

Enjoy!

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

Russell Jay Hendel, President, Rashiyomi

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**Generalization Daily Rashi Lv16-28, Nu06-02, Nu05-06, Lv13-29, Lv13-38, Ex21-29, Lv20-27, Dt17-02, Dt29-17
Thur-Sat 8/16/2018 - 8/20/2018**

Background: Although we try and stick to Rashi comments, we have expanded the scope of the Rashi Newsletter to occasionally include Talmudic comments even if Rashi did not cite them since the *method of derivation* is the same as that done by Rashi.

Today we gather a collection of verses showing the equality of men and women. This is the biblical basis for the equality of men and women in Judaism.

The method of derivation uses the **Rashi Generalization method** whereby 8 verses are grouped in 4 categories showing that men and women are equal in 4 areas. The verses are compactly summarized in the table below. One

of these verses occurs in this week's Parshah, and hence this digest.

Biblical Texts:

Verse	Content of Verse (applies to <i>man or woman</i>)	Equality of men/women in following sphere
Lv16-28	Women are trusted to indicate ritual impurity and its removal	Mental competence
Nu06-02	Vow to abstain from wine	High Spiritual aspirations
Nu05-06	If temple is trespassed person should confess and repent	Right of repentance (obligation of monetary expiation)
Lv13-29 Lv13-38	Laws of Leprosy corresponding to ritual impurity arising from character deviation	States of ritual purity and impurity (character (im)perfection) as well as the right of removing impurity
Ex21-29	If an ox gore a man or woman...the owner is liable to death but can expiate sin by paying ransom	Value of life
Lv20-27 Dt17-02 Dt29-17	Death penalty for idolatrous practices	Responsibility (Death penalty); Right to monotheistic beliefs

Talmudic Comments: The major source for these comments is the Talmudic tractate of Baba Kama, folio 15. I have followed the idea of looking at all verses where the phrase *man or woman* is mentioned. This brings in more verses than mentioned in the Talmud. Because I am interested in the relationship with verses I have slightly deviated from the exact flow of language in the Talmud.

We review the items in the Table which have been grouped into 4 categories (Blue, Green, Yellow and Orange).

Blue Category: The verse in question deals with the state of ritual impurity of women during their period. The verse states that purification requires immersion in the *Mikvah*, a Jewish ritually purifying immersion water body, as well as a counting of days without impurity.

The Talmud points out that an inference from this is that a woman is *trusted* to say she is ritually impure, or to say, she counted and immersed and is pure. The Rashi **Generalization method** then states that *from this we learn that women are trusted in communicating the religious state of any object. For example, a woman is trusted to say that a certain food she prepared is kosher or not.*

Green Category: As I already indicated, I am deviating slightly from the Talmud. The verse in question, **Nu06-02**, is not cited in the Talmudic discussion which focuses on equality *before the law*. But what about equality *above the law*. What about the right to aspire to a non-required religious height? Therefore, **Nu06-02** unequivocally says, *When a man or woman vows to become a Nazirite!* The law unequivocally allows women the same rights as men to take on themselves higher spiritual goals.

Yellow Category: These four verses together state that women besides having property rights, have the right to use money and words to atone for past sins. Just as men have a right to start over through repentance, so to, a woman who sins is not intrinsically corrupt, but has a right to repent and atone and expiate their former sins. Let us review the verses

- **Nu05** is the basis for the commandment of repentance. When a person sins, they repent through a verbal confession and a commitment to atone their ways. When property has been involved they must set aside money to atone. Using the **Rashi Generalization method**, we infer, that in general, women have monetary rights, and they can use money and feelings, to erase their past and start over through repentance.
- **Lv13-29:38** is the basis for the laws of leprosy. The Bible (at **Dt24-08:09**) explicitly identifies Leprosy as corresponding to a psychological illness known as the *slander complex*. The *slander complex* includes a host of symptoms which center around mistrustful feelings, misinterpreting people's intentions, complaining, and slandering. The Leprosy ritual impurity procedure, as well as the Leprosy purification procedure, have as a goal of rehabilitation. The Bible by stating *man or woman* explicitly extends this right to both men and women. In other words, personality imperfections are not intrinsic to either men or women; they both have the right to expiation. Using the **Rashi Generalization method** we would argue that women are equal to men in all social aspects with the right of becoming whole again.
- **Ex21-29** speaks about *An ox that gores (to death) a man or woman; ...the owner deserves to die but can atone his sin through paying ransom*. Thus, this particular verse says the life of men and women are of equal value before God. The killing of either of them is a sin. The **Rashi Generalization method** says that men and women have equal intrinsic value in all areas of life.

Orange Category: Lv20-27, Dt17-02, and Dt29-17 speak about the death penalty for a *man or woman* who worships idol or performs idolatrous related practices. The **Rashi Generalization method** infers that men and women are equal to their right of religious freedom to be monotheistic and are morally responsible for all deviations.

Further Talmudic Comments: The Talmud explains why all these verses are necessary. *Women have vulnerability because i) they are not obligated in all commandments, ii) they may enter (at their choice) a marital relationship where their husbands obtain their salary in exchange for the obligation to provide food, clothing and shelter according to social status, iii) (not cited in Talmud but consistent with spirit) women's vows and aspirations to spirituality can be nullified by the men who care for them (father, husband). Therefore, it had to be emphasized that women are equal to men in all areas.*

We also point out that there is "men's talk" in the Talmud saying women are fickle. These views represent individual opinions. They have no basis in the Bible. The Bible clearly considers women competent in all matters of ritual.

Other areas: There are certain areas where women are legally excluded. This might appear to contradict what we have said. I cite two areas and show how they can be dealt with.

- **Priesthood:** Men function as priests in the Temple but not women. Why? Quite easily, in ancient temples, Temple rituals involved female priestesses who taught men how to make love during the ritual. The rituals were designed to use religious rituals to curb male aggression which can be a problem. In fact, Judaism was the first religion whose creation stories and Temple rituals officially had nothing to do with sex. Even non-religious scholars credit our Patriarch Abraham as having introduced the idea that prophecy need not have anything to do with sex.
- **Kingship:** First the derivation. The source for the fact that women can't be kings is the same as the source that appointing a king is allowed: **Dt17-14:15** states *When you come to the land promised to you by God and say 'I want a king like all surrounding nations.'* *You may place a king that God has chosen; the king must come from your native citizens....* We use the **Rashi pronoun rule** which states that if a noun (king) is repeated (in this case three times) instead of using a pronoun it comes for emphasis. Here the emphasis is *king but not queen* (Note: A pronoun (he vs she) would not have sufficed since pronouns are not separate words in Hebrew but implied by the verb).

- How do we deal with this? Simple: The great biblical commentator the Abarbanel points out that unlike any other commandment it says in the verse 'and you say I want a king like all surrounding nations.' This is amplified in **1 Sam 8** where the people ask for a King. Samuel the prophet makes it clear that they shouldn't have asked for a king 'like all surrounding nations' since 'God is your king.' In other words, there should be no kingship to begin with. If there is kingship, it will resemble the male dominated hierarchies of other nations, not because that is what God wants, but rather because that is what the people want. In passing, Moses (**Nu11**) as well as Samuel explain the ideal national state is one run by prophets at the word of God. And indeed, we find many female prophetic leaders including Deborah, the Judge and military confidant. The Bible also indicates that for example Sarah and Rebecca ran their house and the children's upbringing more than husbands. So yes, female leadership is in; but female political leadership is out because all political leadership is out. God tolerated the desire to impose a political system like surrounding nations, but it is not desirable.

There are other areas but the above suffices for a short digest. In the introduction I already pointed out that the Talmudic era saw further development of gender equality. For example, unlike even the modern era, Jewish law encourages reverse discrimination and pushes female litigation to the front of the queue for appearance before judges.

Praised be Him who Chose Them and Their Learning

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I-REFERENCE: Dt26-05d We went down to Egypt with a few people explained by Gn46-27: with 70 people

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 **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) *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