

# The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 30 #6, Oct 24, 2018

*Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, VaYaYRaH*

All materials on RashiYomi website, including this Newsletter, are free, provided proper acknowledgement is made. RashiYomi Inc., consistent with Jewish Laws on education, proudly refuses any donations. Acknowledgement to our work can be made by citing, **RashiYomi, Inc.**, or [www.RashiYomi.com](http://www.RashiYomi.com). See the Appendix for a complete copyright statement as well as for a summary of the 10 RashiYomi rule

*Quickie Issue – This issue devoted to Rashis that are quickly explained  
This issue is devoted to the Biblical description of Abrahamitic charity*

- A) *He lifted his eyes*
- A) *He understood that*
- B) *There were 3 people standing before him*
- B) *He ran towards them from his tent*
- C) *Please don't leave*
- D1) *Let water be taken for you*
- D2) *Wash your legs*
- D3, E) *Rest under the (oak) tree*
- D4) *I will take a loaf of bread*
- D5, F) *You will satisfy yourselves*
- D6, G) *Then you can go*
- C) *Because you honor me* (Gn18-02:05)

These verses describe in detail the Abrahamitic approach to charity and giving. They are worth reading, worth aligning with our legal codes, and worth seeing the nuances that Rashi points out. Let us begin.

- A) He lifted his eyes
- A) He saw (understood)

Rashi here uses the **Climax Method** a distinguished part of the **Format Method**. James Kugel in his beautiful book, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry, Parallelism and Its History*, John Hopkins University Press, 1998, teaches that when two verse clauses say the same thing (*he lifted his eyes, he saw*) then the climax

principle teaches us that the 2<sup>nd</sup> clause should be seen as extending and building on the first clause. Kugel shows that this method of reading, was indeed the method of writing, reading, and listening in the entire Near Eastern culture.

Therefore, following Kugel's approach to Parallelism we interpret the second (A) clause as meaning not *he saw* which has the same meaning of *he lifted his eyes* but rather *he understood* in the same sense as the English usage of *looking over a situation* where *looking* means *understand*.

So, the first charity rule we infer is that one must be active in seeking charitable situations. Do not wait for a request, but seek out opportunities. Remember, the needy are shy. You must seek them, they do not seek you.

- B) 3 people were standing before him
- B) He ran towards them

Rashi here, again uses the **Parallelism Method**. The contrast of *them standing* versus *his running* again emphasizes that one must actively seek charitable opportunities.

- C) Please don't leave
- C) [Please stay over] because you passed by me [so it honors me that you stay]

Rashi, as shown in the bracketed items interprets the passage to refer to a plea by Abraham to accept his charity. First, he asks that his guests not leave; then he emphasizes that since they passed by him, he is honored to have them at guests the implication being that even if they don't want to stay for themselves, they should stay to honor Abraham.

This too is part of Jewish law: The emphasis on charity is not just the monetary giving but on the interpersonal relationship with the person receiving. If the giving is not done in a friendly open manner it is close to worthless. This is actually explicitly stated in the Jewish lawbooks.

- D1) Let water be taken for you
- D2) Wash your legs
- D3) Rest under the (big) tree
- D4) I will take a loaf of bread
- D5) You will satisfy yourselves
- D6) Then you can go

Rashi here again uses the **Parallelism Method**. Notice the change in verb usage. *Wash*, *rest*, *satisfy*, *go*, are active, the guests must do these activities, but *be taken* is passive. Rashi explains that *be taken* means that a messenger would give them the water.

Although Rashi does not further elaborate we see here a concern for modesty. The washing is a discrete matter and should be done privately with an impersonal messenger; while the resting and eating are done by the host with the guests.

Rav Hirsch in a beautiful essay, *A Good Take I Give You, My Torah*, points out that the important thing in education is the *take* not the *gift*. A teacher can give in an unlimited manner; the important thing in teaching is what the student can take, not what the teacher can give.

Similarly, in general for charity (teaching is the charity of knowledge), the emphasis should not

be on how much you are *giving* but on how much people are *receiving*. You give according to the needs of the person. You don't get more reward simply for giving more. You get more reward for giving what can be taken.

- E) Rest under the tree (the oak)

Rashi here uses the **Grammar Method**. Instead of staying *rest under a tree* Rashi instead requests *rest under the tree*. The use of the definite article, *the*, points to a well-known tree. Recall that Abraham was staying in the town called *The Mamre Oaks*. Mamre was a colleague of Abraham. Apparently, the town had a big oak tree or trees which gave shade. Hence Rashi explains that *the tree* refers to these special oaks on which the town was named.

- F) You will satisfy yourself.

Rashi here uses the **Meaning-Reference** method; that is, he cites other verses showing that the Hebrew word used in this verse, *saadu*, refers to satisfaction. He cites **Ju19-05** and **P104-15** which also use this verb.

Again, we have the emphasis on the interpersonal relationship. It is not enough to give food; the food must be of high quality. It is not enough to give; the receiver must be allowed to satisfy his hunger. The emphasis should be on interpersonal relationship where you not only give to the needy but also befriend the person.

- Satisfy yourselves on the bread
- G) Then you can go

Rashi here, uses the **Grammar method**. Rashi clarifies that there are two possible interpretations to the verse:

- Satisfy yourself on the

- bread after you go
- Satisfy yourself on the bread, then go.

Rashi's point is that the Hebrew word used is a connective.

- As an abstract prepositional pronoun, it would mean after you go, then satisfy yourself on bread
- As a sentence connective it would mean, satisfy yourself on bread, then go

Both interpretations are consistent with the meaning of the Hebrew word used. Most of the Rashi commenters point out that Rashi's inference is based on simple logic: It makes more sense to say that you eat first and then go.

From a halachic viewpoint, the emphasis here again, is on what the person needs not on what you can give. The 3 guests of Abraham were on a journey. Yes, they needed a rest, but then they must resume their journey. It would be wrong for Abraham to retain them; he would be giving more but it wouldn't correspond to what they need.

We hope you enjoyed this review of charity laws today.

## APPENDIX

### THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES

#### *A Lightning Summary with Examples*

Copyright 2001, RashiYomi Inc., Dr Hendel President,  
[www.RashiYomi.com/rules-01.htm](http://www.RashiYomi.com/rules-01.htm)

#### **NOTE ON COPYRIGHTS:**

This particular appendix, like many portions of the RashiYomi website, are protected by a paid copyright. However, we clarify that the intent of RashiYomi copyright statements is the intent expressed in the creative commons copyright statement, the full statement of which may be found at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/legalcode> and the human readable summary which may be found at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>. The basic intent is: (1) (by) any citation of RashiYomi explanations, rules etc. should acknowledge the RashiYomi website as the author by giving its URL: <http://www.RashiYomi.com> (or the specific page on the website); (2) (Nc) It is prohibited for anyone to use the material on this website for commercial use, that is to derive monetary gain from it; (3) (as) while people are encouraged to cite paragraphs of explanations from

RashiYomi in their own works, they must share their works in a similar manner under the creative commons agreement, **cc by Nc as version 3.0**; they must cite the URLs for the RashiYomi website and the creative commons website. In short, our intention is to facilitate distribution of Torah educational material and not inhibit that distribution with monetary interests or lack of acknowledgment. For precise legal details see the URLs cited earlier. The contents of this paragraph govern all future uses of RashiYomi material and take precedence (or clarify and explain) already existing copyrights as well as permissions given in private emails.

=====

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

=====

**Rule 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 (e.g. 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

=====

**Rule 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)

=====

**Rule IV-PARALLELISM: EXAMPLE:** (Ex20-04) Don't POSSESS the gods of others Don't MAKE idols RASHI: So both POSSESSion & MAKING of idols are prohibited

=====

**Rule V-CONTRADICTION: EXAMPLE:** (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.

=====

**Rule 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

=====

**Rule VII-FORMATTING: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition):** Ex12-09c) 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)

=====

**Rule 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

=====

**Rule 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.

=====

**Rule 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