

The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 31#8, May 9th, 2019

Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, Emor

© RashiYomi.com 2019

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. See the Appendix for a complete copyright statement as well as for a summary of the 10 RashiYomi rule

*We need questions! Please **send questions on Rashi to RashiYomi@GMail.Com** A special treat this week: We review a famous passage which the Karaites used to try and show that Talmudic derash is arbitrary and capricious. Read a simple solution to this problem. Please enjoy.*

I: Introduction

Today we deal with one of the great interpretative enigmas in Biblical verses. The biblical text clearly and unambiguously states *From the day after the Sabbath Count 50 days....Proclaim a holiday*, Shavuoth. The Karites argued that if the text says Sabbath then it must refer to the Sabbath. Is it not homiletic, they argued, to interpret the word Sabbath as the first day of the Passover Holiday?

As we go through today's posting we will expose the reader to many concepts about Peshat and Derash. We will show the Talmudic approach is the simple straightforward approach. But we will start from the beginning and gradually work our way up to the goal of understanding this

II: The 50 Day Count to Shavuoth (Lv23-15,16,23)

Between Passover and Pentecost (Shavuoth) there are 7 weeks. See the text in the Table.

Rashi says that the *Peshat* of this verse is that you count 50 days (See #5 in the table)

This is where we will start.

- 1) Count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath
- 2) From the day you bring the first-barley offering
- 3) Seven sabbaths, that are complete
- 4) Until the day after the 7th Sabbath,
- 5) Count 50 days
- 6) [and then] offer a new Minchah for God.
- 7) ...Proclaim a Holiday [Shavuoth]

III: The Talmudic Interpretation, The Derash

Rashi quickly observes that the Talmudic interpretation of this verse is different.

The Talmudic interpretation is that we count 49 days. The statement Until the day after the 7th Sabbath would mean Until but not including.

Well Until could certainly mean Until but not including. But it usually doesn't. Usually, until means until and including.

Why should it mean something different here? Rashi does not tell us. Instead he calls this a Midrashic interpretation.

But doesn't that mean that the Talmudic interpretation is not Peshat, not the simple straightforward meaning of the text?

IV: Recall, that Rashi does not always give reasons for what he is saying. Sometimes, especially when Rashi uses a well-known method, he leaves it to the teacher of the reader to supply these missing reasons. In this case, I argue that Rashi is using the Parallelism method. In the Table below, we present the Leviticus and Deuteronomic passages describing the counting for Shavuoth.

Dt15-09:10	Lv23-15:16	Parallelism
Count for yourselves 7 weeks	Count for yourselves	Both texts say to count
From the time you start sickling grain	From the day after the Sabbath, [from] the time you bring the first-barley offering	3 things identified 1) Start Sickling 2) Day After Sabbath 3) Day of 1 st barley
Then you begin to count 7 weeks	7 Sabbaths that are complete until the day after the 7 th Sabbath, count 50 days	Two things identified 1) 7 weeks 2) 7 Sabbaths
....	
And make a holiday of weeks (Shavuoth)	And bring a new Minchah to God...proclaim a holiday for yourselves	Both texts: After the counting proclaim a holiday

Let us carefully review the rows in the table.

Both the Leviticus and Deuteronomic text require counting between Passover and Shavuoth.

Now skip over to the third row. Do you see how *weeks* and *Sabbaths* correspond? This is the power of parallelism. `

But can we independently justify this correspondence. It turns out there are two other ways to justify that *Sabbath* = *Week*.

V: Two Proofs: *Sabbath* = *Week*

Method 1: Rashi Meaning Method-Other Verses

Consider the following text, **Lv25-03:04,08** exhibited in the table below. As can be seen, the

phrase *Sabbath-year* refers both to 1) the 7th year in 7-year cycle, 6 of which you sow and one of which you don't work; 2) it can also refer to a *week of years* (7 years).

Six years you will plant...on the seventh year a *sabbath* will be to the land, a *sabbath to God*; your field may not be planted....and you will count 7 *Sabbath-years* [that is a week of years], 7 years 7 times,49 years.

Method 2: Rashi Meaning Method-Figures of Speech

Even without another verse we can use the Rashi Meaning method involving Figures of Speech.

Recall the Metonymy Figure of Speech: You can name something by a good example of it. Thus, *honey* technically refers to honey but can also, because of metonymy, mean *anything sweet*; *day* really means the 12-hour lit part of the day, but by Metonymy can mean the *entire day*. Similarly *give me a hand*, because of metonymy can mean *give me yourself to help* (The *hand* is a good example of how help is extended)

So, the Sabbath, the best example of a *day* in the week, can, by metonymy refer to the entire week.

Let us summarize: The parallelism of Dt15-09:10 and Lv23-15:16 points to the fact that *weeks* and *Sabbaths* are parallel suggesting they mean the same thing. We can confirm this either by using the Rashi Other Verse method or by using the Rashi Figure of Speech Method.

VI: Why are 7 weeks called 50 days?

We can now revisit the verse which says that you count *until* the day after the 7th Sabbath [week], 50 days. But we just saw that

$$\text{Weeks} = \text{Sabbaths}$$

And the Deuteronomic text requires counting 7 weeks (It even uses the word weeks).

Because Deuteronomy explicitly tells us to count 7 weeks, *therefore*, we reinterpret *until* to mean *until but not including*. Thus, the texts are harmonized

1. Dt15-09 Count 7 weeks
2. Lv23-15 Until (but not including) 50 days

Notice that the reason we so interpret is because of the parallelism.

VII: Peshat vs. Derash

We can now enunciate a very deep and profound principle in the meanings and contrasts of *Peshat* and *Derash*.

1. *Peshat* is the *superficial* (*Pashut*) reading of a verse *by itself*. Indeed, if we read Lv23-15 by itself it suggests we count until day 50 including day 50
2. *Derash* does not mean something fanciful. It simply means a *non-superficial reading of the text*. In this case the parallelism of two verses describing the same counting *forces* us to reinterpret 50 days as 7 weeks.

What then is the true meaning? By virtue of the parallelism, we see that the true meaning is that *until 50 days* means *until but not including*.

This idea, that the *derash* might be the true meaning while the *peshat* might be a superficial reading is very important. Why then does Rashi bring the *peshat*, the *superficial* reading. Rashi wants to thereby emphasize that we interpret the verse *not* because *until* means *until and including*, but rather *because* of the parallelism itself.

VIII: Three Names for the First Barley Offering

Now look at the 2nd row of the Table in Section

IV, comparing **Lv23-15:16**, and **Dt15-09:10**. Both texts speak about *when you start counting*. From the parallelism we infer three different names of the time to start to count

- 1) From the time you bring your *first-barley offering*
- 2) From the time you *start to sickle grain*
- 3) The *day after the Sabbath*

One reasonable approach of unifying these items is the following:

- *Sabbath* here means *the first day of the Passover holiday* on which we rest [Sabbath] from work
- We can't harvest on the first day of Passover (We can't do work on Passover)
- But we can start sickling grain the next day
- Furthermore, on the very day we start sickling grain we bring the first-barley offering to God.

This is all reasonable and based on the parallelism. But can *Sabbath* mean a holiday? Does it ever mean holiday? Even if it does mean holiday, isn't it a rare usage? In fact, why couldn't the text be clearer and say *the day after the Passover*?

IX: Sabbath Means Holiday

It turns out there is one holiday, *Yom Kippur*, that the Torah calls *Sabbath* in two places (**Lv23-32** and **Lv16-31**.)

So at least there is a precedent for using the term *Sabbath* to refer to a holiday. And it does make sense since on holidays we abstain from work with the Hebrew word meaning abstention being *shabbath*.

But there is a deeper connection. A holiday is called *Sabbath* if you want to emphasize *abstention*. *Yom Kippur* is called *Sabbath* to emphasize the more intense abstention from both work and eating.

But now we understand why the Passover, *in this particular instance*, is called, *Sabbath*. The Torah wishes to emphasize that no sickling work can be done on the Passover holiday itself. Rather, the sickling must start after the holiday. Since this is one of the few times in the Torah when there is an emphasis on *abstention* it is called the *Sabbath*.

X: Summary

We *start* by reading the Deuteronomic text: It clearly says from the day you start sickling grain you count 7 weeks and *then* have a Shavuoth festival.

We *next* read the Leviticus text in light of the Deuteronomic text. The Leviticus text emphasizes that Passover is a holiday of rest and we can't start sickling grain then but can do so the next day. We then count 7 weeks until but not including the day after the 7th week, the 50 day, which is proclaimed a holiday, in fact, Shavuoth.

This is the simple reading of the text when the two passages are compared side by side, the Rashi Parallelism method. Along the way we have explained several Rashis including the following:

- **Dt16-09a:** *From when you start sickling grain:* (Rashi) This refers to the harvesting of barley. [Notice that Rashi here is implicitly using the Parallelism Method with the Leviticus text]
- **Lv23-11c** *From the day after the Sabbath:* (Rashi) This refers to the day after Passover. If it really referred to the Sabbath itself [7th day of the week] the text would be ambiguous since there are 52 Sabbaths and even in the Spring time, there are many Sabbaths [Note: Several Rashi commenters point out that Rashi is citing a Talmudic source which

was refuted. However, the argument clarifies the text. We have argued, the true driving force of Rashi is the parallelism.]

- **Lv23-15a** *(Count) From the Day After the Sabbath:* (Rashi) The day after Yom Tov [Again: Rashi derives this from the Parallelism with the Deuteronomic passage]
- **Lv23-16a** *Count Seven Sabbaths.* (Rashi) This means like the Aramaic translation (7 weeks) [Again: I would argue that Rashi uses the parallelism as the main argument but cites the Aramaic translation to bring further proof since it too follows this parallelistic interpretation]
- **Lv23-16b,c** *Until the day after the 7th Sabbath, count 50 days.* (Rashi) The 7th Sabbath means 7 weeks and is 49 days. But I say that this the *Peshat* [which we have explained as the superficial reading] What we called the *Derash* is that it means *until but not including the 50th day* [and this is based on the parallelism with Deuteronomy]

Praise be Him Who Chose Them and Their Learning

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES A Lightning Summary with Examples

Copyright 2001, RashiYomi Inc., Dr Hendel President,
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 Rashiomi 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 COMING not CAME(Gn46-26a)

EXAMPLE: A grammatical conjugation in the Hitpael if 1st root letter is Tzade (Gn44-16a)

=====

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