

The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 31#25, Sep. 5th, 2019
Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, ShoFeTiM & Ki TayTzaY

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I have loads of questions that will last a few weeks. Two relate to this weeks and next weeks Parshah. Please feel free to send questions on Rashi to RashiYomi@GMail.Com

In Dt17-09a and in Dt24-08:09 the phrase *the Priests of the Levites* occurs. Why?

Biblical Text: Dt17-09a [when you have a question]

- You will come
- - To the priests of
- - the Levites
- - To the Judge in those days

[and they will tell you what to do]

Dt24-08:09 Guard [the laws of the] Leprosy affliction, to guard a lot and to do according to all that the Priests-Levites teach you, as I have commanded them, guard to do. Remember what God did to Miryam on the Journey when you left Egypt.

I: How do you ask the question

I recommend re-asking questions using the 10 RashiYomi rules. In this case we use the **Database Method**. In the Bible, Priests are

- Usually called Priests
- In a few verses, are called Priests-Levites

Why? This in fact is the basis of the **Database method**.

II: Rashi Parallelism Method

If we look at **Dt17-09a** we see that that particular verse has a 3-fold parallelism. When asking a religious question, we are told to go to:

- To the Priests of
- The Levites
- To the Judge in those days

Before continuing we note that the Talmud and Sifre sometimes use a confrontational tone in presenting a parallelism: e.g.

To the Judge in those day

Would I then go to a judge in some other time

Such a confrontational tone has as its purpose exaggeration which aids memory and retention. To understand the real point, it is usually best to re-formulate using the RashiYomi rules: There is a 3-fold parallelism, *Priest, Levite, Judge* in those days. What does the parallelism indicate.

III: Explanation of the Parallelism

Rashi already explains the parallelism with his comments

The phrase *Priests Levites* should be interpreted as a construct: *The Priests of the Levites*. In other words, Rashi is interpreting the word *Priests* as in the construct state. Sometimes a Hebrew word changes from the construct and sometimes it is the same

To the Judge in those days. Rashi adds even if he is not as good as former judges you must listen to him

We can now understand the Parallelism

The Priests	Ideally the Priest should be an expert in Torah cf. Malachai 2:7 <i>The Lips of the Priests guard knowledge; Torah is sought from his mouth</i>
The Levites	If the Priests are not that knowledgeable, perhaps the Levites are
To the Judge in those days	And if neither Priests nor Levites excel in Torah Knowledge go to the local judge of that time

In other words, we interpret the three parts of the parallelism as following a climax structure. Recall the Climax is part of the **Rashi Format method** and is used frequently in the Bible.

IV: Are Levites Perceived as Priest Helpers

In the above Parallelism we explained Levites as helping the Priests. Such an arrangement is seen throughout the Torah. We mention two sources

Nu18-06 Behold: I [God] have taken your brothers the Levites from the Jewish people; they are given as a gift to you [Aaron and priests] to service the Temple service

A more subtle description of Levites as helpers of the Priests is found in **Lv01-01:08** describing the elevation offering. Compare the subjects, highlighted in yellow and the verbs, highlighted in green, in the following description of this elevation offering. The 13 activities span the process of offering. See the table on the next column.

Do you notice how the subjects change in the two rows of the Table? Hence the Rashi comment

From activity #5, slaughter, there is an obligation for Priests to do it (Activities #1-#4 can be done by laymen)

1) The person [offering the offering] will offer an unblemished male [animal]
2) He will offer it to the Temple Door to obtain Good will before God
3) He will lean his hands on the head of the offering to become acceptable for him for atonement
4) He will slaughter the cattle before God
5) The priests will offer the blood
6) They will sprinkle it on the altar that is at the Temple door
7) He will strip the elevation offering [of its skin]
8) He will cut it up to its parts
9) The sons of Aaron the Cohen will place a fire on the altar
10) They will arrange wood on the fire
11) The sons of the Priests will arrange the pieces ...
12) He will wash the intestines in water
13) The priest will incense all on the altar

So far, we have used the **Rashi Database method**. But the Malbim complements this with the **Rashi Reference Method**.

2Ch30-17 The Levites were assigned on the slaughter of the Passover sacrifices

Thus, we see that the Levites assisted in the Priests in those duties permitted to them. There are many other similar verses.

Just to recap: This lends support that Priests were supposed to be the true masters of the law, followed by Levites, followed by Judges.

The Talmud also learns from this verse *if possible, the great court should consist of Priest sages; but if there are non-priests who surpass them in learning they are permissible.*

V: Why Mention Other Judges/Levites Here

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that Deuteronomy specially emphasizes those laws

operational after conquest of Israel where the Jews do not constantly live in the presence of God and miracles.

This would tie in with this Parshah. In the wilderness, Aaron the prophet could answer all questions. But in conquered Israel, sometimes the priests were not of high caliber and people would have to rely on Levites or *the judge of those days*.

VII What about Dt24-08:09

What about other verses with the phrase *Priests of the Levites*.

This is a general principle in Rashi. If he lays down a principle in one verse, he may, or he may not repeat it in other verses. It is up to the student of Rashi (you!) to transfer the learning to other verses.

In this case, with regard to Leprosy, the Priests are the declarer of status as indicated in **Leviticus 13,14**. But there is a psychological aspect of Leprosy. Let us look at the verse again

Dt24-08:09

- **Guard** [the laws of the] Leprosy affliction,
- **To guard** a lot and to do
- **according to all that the Priests-Levites teach you, as I have commanded them, guard to do.**
- **Remember what God did to Miryam on the Journey when you left Egypt.**

Do you see how the verse repeats itself three times *guard*? It then explains *Remember what happened to Miryam* (who was punished with Leprosy for slandering Moses).

Here we use the Paragraph Juxtaposition (or Sentence Juxtaposition) rule of the **Rashi Grammar Rule**. The Highlighted yellow explains how you *guard leprosy*, by remembering what God did to Miryam.

But if so, this is not a specific Priestly function.

The Priests are the ones who must certify that an affliction is Leprotic and requires the procedures mentioned in Lv13. But

- Besides the rulings of the Priests there is
- The guarding of slander (and that is done by the Levites).

This is the simple meaning of this paragraph. Rashi simply emphasizes the connection between the two sentences and relies on his previous explanation of the phrase *Priests Levites* in this week's Parshah.

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES

A Lightning Summary with Examples

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

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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 offerings* RASHI: *honey* includes any sweet fruit juice

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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)

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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

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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.

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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

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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)

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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

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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.

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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