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*Dt31-26A*

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*Our mission is to show all Rashi comments as Peshat, the simple straightforward meaning of the text following the same laws of interpretation governing ordinary everyday conversation.*

The main Rashiomi categories of interpretation are :

- 1) **Grammar:** *Including verb conjugation, rules of style, paragraph development, and all relations of form and meaning*
- 2) **Parallelism:** *Including all nuances and inuendoes arising from same-verse parallelism, multi-verse parallelism, database inquiries, and contradictory verses*
- 3) **Symbolism:** *including parables, images, metaphors, similes, motifs, archetypes, signs, and tokens*
- 4) **Meaning:** *including all figures of speech*



## Verse Text Dt31-26a

*Be involved in taking [laquoach] this [written] Scroll of Torah and place it on the side in the Temple Ark*

## Rashi Text:

[The verb conjugation **laquoach** is similar to **Zachor** (be involved in remembering [the Sabbath] **Ex20-08**) **Shamor** (be involved in commemorating [the Sabbath] **Dt05-12**), **Haloch** (be involved in going to and tell David [this prophecy] **2S05-10**)

## Supplementary material

- The typical conjugation indicating a command is **lequax** (take), **zechor** (remember), **shemor** (watch)
- But these verses use a different conjugation: **laquax** (be involved in taking), **zachor** (be involved in remembering), **shamor** (be involved in watching).
- Rashi's contribution (here he disagrees with other grammarians of his day and modern grammarians) is that this different conjugation has a different meaning

# RASHI RULE USED TO EXPLAIN THIS RASHI

- In this Rashi, we use the method of **Conjugational Grammar**
- Most people remember learning how to conjugate (write) verbs from either their elementary school or their children's elementary school
- For example *I watched* is **Shamarti**, *You watched* is **Shamarta**, *He watched* is **Shamar**
- You also learn that the command, *watch* is **Shemar**
- Rashi had an advanced approach to Grammar
- Just as in English there is
  - a **simple present tense**, for example, *I am eating an apple*, and
  - A **habitual present tense**, for example, *I eat apples*
- So too, according to Rashi, there is a
  - **Simple command**: **Watch!** And also
  - **A habitual command**: **Be involved in watching this**
- What is the different between the simple and habitual?
  - The **simple** is done once (*I am eating the apple; Watch the apple!*)
  - The **habitual** is done frequently (*I eat apples; be involved in watching apples*)
- Let us look at some (beautiful) examples

# Examples of Rashis Habitual Present

**EXAMPLE 1:** In the 10 commandments it doesn't tell us

- *Watch the Sabbath, Remember the Sabbath* but rather says
- *Be involved in watching the Sabbath, be involved in remembering the Sabbath*

**ANALYSIS:** If the simple command was used then if I find a good wine or a good cut of meat and designate it for the Sabbath, I have fulfilled my obligation to **watch** and **commemorate**.

But if the habitual command is used then for example, if I find a good wine on Monday and designate for the Sabbath and then find another better wine on Tuesday then I must designate the Tuesday wine. I must continually designate.

**JEWISH LAW:** The Talmud states that Hillel acted like this, continually commemorating the Sabbath. Rashi shows that this attitude of Hillel has a grammatical basis. Jewish law itself does not require daily watching and commemorating the Sabbath, but does require, that we continually think, during the week, of our needs for Sabbath and if something (like wine is low) then we must buy new bottles. In this way, the grammatical conjugation leads to new Jewish law.

## Application of Rashi Rule to Dt31-26a

- Moses doesn't use the **simple** command; he doesn't tell the Priest-Levites, "**Take** *this Torah Scroll and put it in the ark*"
- Rather Moses uses the **habitual present**; he commands "**Be continually involved in taking** the Torah Scroll and placing it near the ark."
- What is the difference: Perhaps a censored RaDaQ explains this. RaDaQ offers a theory of words in the Bible that are written one way and pronounced differently. He explains: *When there was doubt in the written text because of different versions, then the Priests, opened the original Torah scrolls of Moses to check true text. There were several true scrolls. If two of them said one way and a third say another way, then the two versions were preserved by one being written and the other being read.*
- Although RaDaQ was one of our great Rishonim, and wrote this explanation in an introduction to his commentary on the Prophets, nevertheless, some zealots decided to censor this and not print it.
- I myself have a different explanation of words **written one way but read another way**. But I wanted to show how the RaDaQs explanation is based on the idea that the Torah Scroll was not a museum piece taken once and placed in the ark (simple command) but rather it was continually consulted (habitual command). This of course highlights the need of continual study a strong value of Judaism.

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- Rashi's introduction of the idea of a habitual present deviates not only from the grammarians of his day but also from modern grammarians
  - Some Rishonim consider **Shamor** and **Shemor** to mean the same thing: **Watch**
  - Modern grammarians know of no language where there are habitual commands
- But this idea of Rashi is profound and leads to halachic novelty
  - We have already seen how this grammatical idea affects our observance of the Sabbath
  - We have also seen how it affects our perception of the Temple Torahs
- There are many commandments using this habitual present and from them we learn the requirement of **daily** performance.
- We close with one more example: The command to priests to bless the people is stated in the habitual present showing that Priests must bless the people **daily** (not once a year) (**Nu06-23**)