

ParShaT *BeHaR BeQhuKoSaI*- One Pager Series

<https://www.Rashiyomi.com/rule3504.pdf> Adapted from The Rashi Newsletter,

(c) Rashiyomi.com May 2021, Dr. Hendel, President,

Full statement of copyright is found at www.Rashiyomi.com/copyrights.htm

Rashi #1-7: Biblical Text: Lv26-14a,b:15a,b:16a,b,c:

If you do not listen to me [*listen to Torah lectures or classes*]

---and do not do the entirety of these commandments [*commandment performance / observance*]

If: My statutes you despise [*ridicule those who are particular about commandments without reason*]

If: My civil laws you can't stand [*You hate application of Jewish values to modern secular standards*]

To the point: of [*advocating*] not doing my commandments

To the point: of annulment of my covenant [*Apostasy: Deny God, prophecy, Sinaitic revelation*]

Rashi Text: The seven Rashi comments are embedded in the textual narrative in bracketed italicized comments. We have deviated from Rashi's language in certain points (for example we only address 6 of the 7 outreach problems mentioned in the text) in order to emphasize Rashi's *derivation* from the biblical text. Are job now is to defend the Rashi comment as *peshat, spontaneous and natural*.

Parallelism: Rashi is using the technique of *climactic parallelism*. To explain this technique, one of the four major exegetical pillars we repeat the first two lines of the biblical narrative:

If you do not listen to me [*listen to Torah lectures or classes*]

---and do not do the entirety of these commandments [*commandment performance*]

Notice how these two lines *appear* to repeat the same thing. We say, they are *parallel consecutive passages*. The essence of parallelism occurs when a single theme is repeated in the biblical text but in different words.

We just explained how to *recognize* a parallel passage: by repetition. But how do we *interpret* it. Kugel, an American Bible scholar in his book *The Art of Biblical Poetry* renewed the technique of climactic parallelism. Climactic parallelism, Kugel, explains: i) prohibits interpreting the two passages as only repetition; ii) prohibits interpreting the two passages as saying totally different things; rather iii) climactic parallelism requires seeing the 2nd clause as accepting the first clause and building on it by adding a climax, adding more. Kugel uses the catchy phrase *A, moreover B*, where *A* refers to the first line; *B* to the 2nd line, and *A moreover B* indicates the climax. Kugel explains that parallelism was a very common technique in the near east and this is the way it was perceived. I have added that parallelism is alive and well today (for example Kennedy's *Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country*).

It is important to understand, that the *A moreover B* is not a consequence of word meaning but a consequence of the parallelism itself; the parallelism implies *A moreover B*. So in the passage above: The *A* clause speaks about not listening; the *B* clause added to not listening, not doing. The *A moreover B* approach requires interpreting the clause as *A*) not *listening* to lectures on Torah obligations; *B*) not *performing* (Rashi in fact carefully explains this in the parts of Rashi that we left out.)

Paragraph Parallelism: I have built on Kugel's idea. Kugel only deals with 2- or 3-line parallelism. But the above passage is a 6-line parallelism. I call it *paragraph parallelism*. To fully understand this we need to notice the grammatical cues. Just as Kugel wrote about *parallelism interpretation*, Berlin, wrote about *parallelism technique*. Notice the sequence in arial black: *if if if to the point, to the point*. Similarly notice the contrast that the first set of two lines talks about actions (*do, listen*) while the second set of lines places the *nouns* (*statutes, civil laws*) up front (*my statutes despised* vs. *despise my statutes; my civil laws you can't stand* vs. *you can't stand my civil laws*.)

Subject Matter Expertise: To fully understand this passage we must see that it is addressed to people who do outreach (for example, Rabbis, social workers etc.). One Rabbi might tell another Rabbi: *I am sending you a congregant: He no longer is careful about performance; or he might say He no longer is interested in coming to lectures; or he ridicules religious ritual (non-civil) performance; or he tries to prevent religious gathering (not doing the commandments).*

Summary and conclusion: We tie together the four themes above: i) climactic parallelism, ii) paragraph parallelism, iii) grammatical markers (*if---until; or verb first – noun first*), iv) subject matter expertise of outreach experts who use keywords to describe stages of non-performance: *lecture, performance, ritual law, civil law; interference; apostasy*. In this sense, the Rashi is most beautiful. From just three verses Rashi learns the 6 stages of observance, a key skill needed by all people in outreach. Any outreach expert hearing these verses and aware of the parallelism technique would immediately recognize years of work as neatly and compactly summarized in these 3 tiny verses. [The 7th outreach element mentioned in Rashi is not derived from the parallelism and hence not discussed in this one pager]