

ParShaT *DeVaRiM* One Pager Series

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[Background: We have been bringing controversies between Rashi and either academic scholars or other Jewish commentaries. Today we examine a Rashi-Ramban controversy illuminated by the Radatz, Rabbi Dovid Tzvi Hoffman.]

Rashi #1 Biblical Text: Dt01-13e [Moses discusses the requirements of judge appointments] *Bring people who are*

**wise,*

**intelligent, and*

**known to your tribes.*

Rashi Text: known to your tribes: (a) *They are known to you.* (b) Because if a litigant came before me dressed in a suit (b1) I don't know who he is, (b2) I don't know from which tribe he comes, (b3) I don't know if he is a proper person. But you know him since you have raised him. Therefore it says *known to your tribes.*

Ibn Ezra Text: known to your tribes They are known today. That all recognize him.

Ramban Text: Ramban cites Rashi and points out that Rashi is citing the Sifrey. Ramban then continues: Rashi interprets

** bring people who are wise, intelligent and known to your tribes – tribes is connected to known. But I, Ramban, interpret*

** Bring according to your tribes: people who are wise, intelligent, and well-known*
In other words, the people are *well known* as people of outstanding character who are worthy of being judges.

Did you notice how Ramban breaks up *known to your tribes* and reinserts *tribes* earlier in the verse. Who gives him the right to do this? The Radatz illuminates:

RaDaTz Text: The Hebrew *vee'duim* can mean

- * *known to someone* as in *known to your tribes* (Rashi)
- * *well known and proper* (Several of the Aramaic translations)

There is a pausal punctuation on *known, to your tribes*. (In English we would use a comma which indicates pause as just shown). The pausal punctuation, the comma, separates *tribes* from *known* and therefore the verse should be read *bring for your tribes people who are wise, intelligent, and well-known*.

As proof compare with verse 15.

This table compares verses 13 and 15. Radatz uses here parallelism

Verse	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Part 6
13	Bring		People who are	Wise	Intelligent	Known to your tribes
15	I took	tribal heads	People who are	Wise	Intelligent	known

Rashiyomi response: The following bullet points respond to the above.

- * The end of the verse always has a pausal punctuation (comma) whether the verse ends in a phrase (no pause necessary) or two distinct words. This pausal punctuation (comma) reflects that people slow down when they come to the end of the sentence.
- * It is clear from the table that *known* in verse 15 means *well-known and respected* but in verse 13 *known to your tribes* means recognized and known. This is inferred from the sequence of words. The Bible simply did not say *bring for your tribes, people who are wise intelligent, and (well) known*. The pausal punctuation (comma) on *known* does not prove anything
- * From the parallelism we infer (from column “Part 6”) that judges must be both a) personally known to the tribes, and also b) well known and respectable people.
- * Rashi gives the correct interpretation on verse 13. The Aramaic translations and Ramban erred in their incorrect interpretation of the pausal punctuation.

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