

The 10 RashiYomi Rules
Their presence in Rashis in VaYiQRaH
Vol 29#01 - Adapted from Rashi-is-Simple

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GOALS

The goal of the Weekly Rashi Digest is to use the weekly Torah portion to expose students at all levels to the ten major methods of Rashi's commentary. Continual weekly exposure to these ten major methods facilitate the acquisition, familiarity, and facility with the major exegetical methods.

Hi

This issue continues our exploration of commandments in each parshah.

Although this Parshah, VaYiQRaH, is about offerings, there is interesting analysis, both psychological and legal, on what is theft. Additionally, we show a cute example of how a Rashi can be objective even though the text is open to multiple interpretations.

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As usual, when making transitions in the Rashi Newsletter we welcome positive and negative comments as well as requests. Please send all comments to RashiYomi@GMail.Com.

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Formatting-Bullet *Rashi Newsletter* Lv05-21b, c, d Thur-Sat 3/15-17/18

Background: The Bible describes the offering for obtaining money through a false oath. In this Rashi, we discuss the description of theft given in the text.

Biblical Text: Lv05-21b, c, d

When a soul sins, trespasses a trespass against God, and makes a denial

- *On a deposit*
- *Or On an investment*
- *Or On theft, or*
- *Or he withhold wages from a colleague*
- *Or he found a lost article*

He denies it and swears falsely...

Rashi Text Contribution of the Rashi Newsletter:

Rashi here uses the **bullet list** method.

- In English, when we wish to indicate bullets we use filled in circles (like the bullets on this line)
- In the Bible, I have shown (*Biblical Formatting, JBQ*, 35(1), pp 17-27, 2007) that they use a repeating keyword. In this case the word "or" functions as a bullet.

As I show in my article, the Bible could have used a non-bulleted description with only one in (Same as in English). It could have said "*And he makes a denial to a colleague on deposits, investment, theft, wage withholding, or lost articles.*" By repeating the keyword *or* on each item, the Biblical Author creates a bullet effect.

But what are bullets? When do you use them whether in English or Hebrew? A bulleted list indicates:

- A common feature to all bulleted items
- With each bulleted item indicating some example of the common feature
- With the entire list categorizing or describing the entire common feature.

Category of Theft	Do I know the owner	What is stolen	Did the owner allow access to what is stolen
Theft	Yes	Physical Object	No
Deposit	Yes	Physical Object	Yes, initially
Wage withhold	Yes	Service	Yes, initially
Investment partnership	Yes	Value (Same dollars need not be returned)	Yes, initially
Lost article	No	Physical Object	No

The table above shows the various nuances of the bulleted items. The common feature is "theft." Each of these is an example of theft. But they differ on:

- What was stolen,
- How it was acquired and
- Who the 2nd party in the transaction is

The unique attributes of each item are identified in the table.

- Theft: I meet a person, taken an object from him, and deny receiving/owing it
- Deposit: I meet a person, receive an object from him, but deny receiving/owing it
- Wage withholding: I meet a person, receive a *service* (not a physical object) from him, but deny receiving/owing it
- Investment: I meet a person, receive value from him, but deny receiving/owing it

Note: In an investment I don't have to return the actual dollars he gave me for investment; I just have to return the *value* of those dollars. Hence we speak about value not dollars

- Lost article: I do not meet a person; I take an object with a clearly identifiable unique sign, but deny receiving /owing it.

By reviewing this table and list one gets insights on why people sometimes for example don't pay taxes or do other forms of theft. They have not adequately been taught distinctions. They may think a behavior is wrong but not theft. They may argue that theft is when you take something from a real somebody without permission. But taxes are i) payments to the government for the ii) services they provide their citizens. Thus, taxes combine i) withholding of payment for services with ii) an unknown owner since the government is not a person.

Contribution of Rambam: Just to make this crystal clear:

- Jewish law in the laws of workers and laws of lost articles explains that *besides* violating the prohibition of withholding wages a person who withholds wages violates theft;
- Besides violating the Biblical injunction and prohibitions connected with return of loss articles with identifiable signs, a person who does not return a lost article with identifying signs has violated theft!

We believe the Rashis on this verse, deriving from the Sifra, shed light on how Talmudic distinctions are used to encourage ethical behavior.

Meaning-Idiom, Grammar *Rashi NewsLetter* Lv05-24a,b Thur 3/18,19/2018

Background: The Bible continues here its discussion of the offering for theft by a false oath. In addition to the offering, the person must pay back the theft and a 25% fine. Notice the grammatical anomaly in the verse text.

Biblical Text:

[When a person denies owed (stolen) money under oath then]

- *He shall pay its head*
- *And add to it, its fifth*s

Rashi and Rashi NewsLetter:

Rashi first uses the **meaning method** here. Rashi explains that the word *head* is similar to the English word *principle*, it indicates the money owed without any interest accrued.

The law specifies that in addition to principle one must pay a fine of 20%. Rashi now uses the **grammar method**. Do you notice the bold, underline, italicized “s” added to fifth in the Biblical text? It indicates the plural. But how do you add *many* 20% fines.

Before I continue, I note that the grammar method gives an air of objectivity. The Bible is forcing us to think of how a person can pay many fifths. True, the case in question is not stated explicitly, but the grammatical anomaly does point to it. We can't avoid this.

Here is the example given by the Sifra, the source of many of Rashi's comments.

A person robbed \$100. He has to return the principle \$100 and \$25 (Why \$25 because \$25 is 20% of the total returned \$125; this is the way Jewish Law operates). Now suppose he really feels guilty. He pays the \$100 and then under oath denies owing the \$25. This is treated as a new case and he owes \$25 + \$6.25 (since \$6.25 is 20% of \$31.25 (\$25+\$6.25). If he now feels guilty and pays the \$25 but denies under oath owing \$6.25 he would have to pay \$6.25 and an additional \$1.56 (Since \$1.56 is 20% of \$7.81 (\$6.25+ \$1.56). This process continues until his oaths result in fines under a penny which need not be paid further.

Contribution of Rambam: In this example, a person pays multiple fifths for one initial principle. There are other examples (brought down by the Rambam in his great code) in which a person repeatedly claims under oath to have already paid the initial \$100. For each oath the person owes a separate \$25. In this case also, the person pays the principle (\$100) and multiple fifths

This is an interesting example of how multiple cases are indicated by an anomalous plural. The indication is objective. But the cases are not explicit. They have to be supplied. And indeed, there are many possibilities.

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHI RULES

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

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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 (eg Dt34-10a) eg 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)** *Marchesheth* means pot; *Machavath* means frying pan (Lv02-05a, 07a) **EXAMPLE (Hononyms)** 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

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III-GRAMMAR: EXAMPLE: BA-ah means CAME;ba-AH means COMING(Gn46-26a)
EXAMPLE: Hitpael conjugation has different rules if 1st root letter is Tzade (Gn44-16a)

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IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion & MAKING** of idols are prohibited

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V-CONTRADICTION: (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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VI-STYLE: RABBI ISHMAEL RULES: EXAMPLE: (Simple verses should be generalized): (Rashi Pesachim 6) (Dt25-04a) *Dont MUZZLE an OX while THRESHING* RASHI: Dont STOP any WORKING ANIMAL from eating

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VII-FORMATting: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition): Ex12-09c) COOK 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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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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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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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