

# The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 30 #24, Feb. 28, 2019  
*Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, VaYaQheL*

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*I erroneously thought last week that the Torah readings of VaYaQhel and PeQuDay were united and therefore explored Rashis on PeQuDaY. However, this Shabbos, VaYaQheL is being read and next Shabbos, PeQuDaY is being read. I therefore am doing one Rashi today from VaYaQheL which applies to about 2 dozen verses and nicely illustrates the **Grammar Rule** of Rashi. It also shows how the commentators expended effort to fully understand the Rabbinic exegesis as the simple meaning of the text. Please **send questions on Rashi to [RashiYomi@GMail.Com](mailto:RashiYomi@GMail.Com)***

Here is the Biblical text for today's digest.

Biblical Text: Ex35-23a

*Every person who had with him*

- Sky blue
- VAV Royal Purple
- VAV worm-dyed wool
- VAV linen
- VAV goat skins
- VAV Reddened ram skins
- VAV Tachash skins

*Brought them [for construction of the Temple]*

Rashi: The VAV in this verse means *or*.

Let us crystalize this Rashi. The Hebrew letter VAV when prefixed to a word can mean

- And
- Or
- Any connective (however, but, etc.)

Thus **Ex35-23** has two possible interpretations

#1) Every person who had *all* 7 enumerated

items (Sky blue AND ALSO Royal Purple AND ALSO worm-dyed wool AND ALSO ...AND ALSO Tachash skins) brought them

#2) Every person who had *any* of the 7 enumerated items (Sky blue OR royal purple OR ...OR Tacash skins) brought it.

Thus, Rashi is addressing to the student that there are two competing interpretations to this verse, one translating VAV as AND and one translated VAV as OR. Rashi explains that the true meaning of the verse is given by VAV=OR: The adjectives *all* and *any* correspond to *and* and *or* respectively.

To understand this Rashi we visit one of our great grammarians the Malbim. The Malbim comments on the *and-or* interpretation of VAV on **Lv20-09**. This unfortunately is typical: A Rashi comment may be understandable with a comment on another verse. One purpose of this Rashi Newsletter is to clarify these

relationships.

Malbim at **Lv20-09**, one of his most beautiful comments, cites two dozen examples spanning the entire Talmud. It turns out there is a controversy between Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Yoshiah whether VAV means *and* or *or*. Malbim brilliantly points out that Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Yoshiah agree in most cases but disagree in one small case. The purpose of this posting is to explain this Malbim and to add today's Rashi to it (which the Malbim overlooked).

Malbim uses the **Rashi Grammar Rule**. He notes 3 types of sentences (today's Rashi gives rise to a 4<sup>th</sup>). They are summarized in the three figures below.

<b>THE SIMPLE POSITIVE COMMAND</b>
<b>RULE:</b> In a simple command VAV always means AND according to both Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Yoshiah.
<b>EXAMPLES:</b> 1) Take a <i>lulav, and ethrog, and haddas, and willow leaves</i> . [Clearly the command is to take all four together not just one] 2) <i>Eat the Pascal lamb with matzoh and bitter herbs</i> [both are required!]

<b>THE SIMPLE PROHIBITIVE COMMAND</b>
<b>RULE:</b> In a simple prohibition VAV means OR according to both Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Yoshiah
<b>EXAMPLES:</b> 1) Don't bring the payment of a prostitute OR the sale of a dog to the Temple because it is an abomination [Clearly the intent is bringing even one, bringing any, is a prohibition] 2) A high priest should not marry a prostitute, or divorce OR... [Clearly the prohibition is on marrying any of these woman (not on marrying all of them together)]

Malbim continues, *Where then do Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Yoshiah differ: They differ in the conditional command.*

Finally, today's verse *Every person with sky*

*blue, VAV Royal purpose VAV...* is neither a simple command, a simple prohibition, nor a conditional command. It is a declarative sentence. I therefore feel honored to join the Malbim and augment his explanation.

<b>CONDITIONAL COMMAND</b>
<b>RULE:</b> In a conditional command there is controversy between Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Yoshiah, one holding VAV means OR and one holding VAV means AND respectively.
<b>EXAMPLES:</b> 1) If you smite your father VAV mother, you receive a death penalty a) Rabbi Jonathan: Holds there is death penalty for killing either one's father or one's mother b) Rabbi Yoshiah: Holds there is a death penalty only if you kill both of them

<b>DECLARATIVE SENTENCE</b>
<b>POSSIBLE RULE:</b> VAV means OR
<b>EXAMPLE:</b> Ex35-23a, today's Rashi. <i>Any person who had EITHER sky-blue OR Royal OR .... brought it</i>

I said *possible rule* since I have not yet investigated all declarative sentences to see if the rule holds. It might be the case for example that sometimes in a declarative sentence it means OR and sometimes it means AND, depending on the context.

Many inferences can be made from this example:

- Very often controversy does not indicate total disagreement but rather disagreement on one small case. Very often there is agreement in most cases
- The **Grammar Method** is a powerful method for understanding controversies
- Understanding Rashis should always be accompanied by a review of similar examples to see when the rule holds.
- No matter how much we admire our great sages, often there are additional cases by which to augment their rules.

*Praise Be Him Who Chose Them & Their Learning*

# 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

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

**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)

**Rule IV-PARALLELISM: EXAMPLE:** (Ex20-04) Don't **POSSESS** the gods of others Don't **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion** & **MAKING** of idols are prohibited

**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.

**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

**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)

**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

**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.

**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