

## ParShaT *Re'eH* One Pager Series

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**[Background]:** We continue to bring controversies between Rashi and either academic scholars or other Jewish commentaries. Today we discuss the *inclusio* biblical form identified by the academic community.]

### **Rashi #1 Biblical Text: Dt14-26a,b,c**

**[Background]:** The Bible requires annually tithing land produce and eating the produce *before God* in Jerusalem. But if the tither is far from Jerusalem he may *redeem* his produce for money and purchase food with the redeemed money in Jerusalem where he eats the purchased food. But what food can he buy with this redeemed money?]

Place	the	money	[down	for	purchase]
[General]	On	<u>anything</u>	your	emotions	lust for
	[for	Example]	cattle	and	sheep
		Wine		or	beer
[General]	in	<u>anything</u>	that	your	emotions ask for

*and then you shall eat it there [in Jerusalem] before God, your Lord.*

**Rashi Text:** The verse has a general-example-general form [as shown in the bracketed comments above]. The interpretation of a general-example-general form is that the *general* clause is interpreted *like* the items in the *example* clause. Since *cattle, sheep, wine, and beer* are *edible earth-based item*, we infer that the tither can only redeem his redemption money on edible earth based items.

**Academic scholarship:** We will explain this enigmatic Rashi step by step. First we note that in the biblical text above the two general clauses [marked general] seem identical. Sandwiched between them are details or examples of the general clause. The academics call this an *inclusio* form; the examples are *included* between two nearly identical clauses. The Talmudic Rabbis give the two names general-detail-general and expansion-limitation-expansion. Rashiyomi prefers the name general-example-general. Academic scholarship has controversy on the

meaning and interpretation of *inclusio*. For example, as is the custom of some academics, they see the repeated general clause as an example of textual corruption.

**The Rashi Approach:** Rashi introduced the idea that the general-example-general form is the biblical way of indicating a paragraph. In modern typesetting, the paragraph is indicated by a white-space separation. A paragraph is considered the *unit of thought*. Paragraphs have *theme* sentences and *development sentences*. The idea of the paragraph is that the meaning and interpretation of the *theme* is found in the development. This is exactly and precisely the Talmudic interpretation of the general-detail-general and expansive-restrictive-expansive form: The general or expansive sentence is seen as a theme which is restricted by the examples or restrictive details.

**Original with Rashi:** People have asked me if this is Dr Lieberman's contribution. The answer is no; it is original with Rashi. Dr. Lieberman did note certain analogies between Greek rhetoric and the *qal-vachomer* (the *fortiori*); but Dr Lieberman did not introduce the idea that biblical forms are markers of certain styles like *paragraphs*.

**The Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael Schools:** Rav Hirsch clearly states that *both* the schools of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael believe the bible speaks in human phraseology. They differ technically on the general-example-general clause.

**Sources:** The Rashi comment is based on a Talmudic statement in BT Eruvin 27 as well as the Sifrey on Deuteronomy. We will now explain it using *human phraseology*.

**Rashi Explained:** Suppose I asked you, "What does cattle and sheep suggest to you?" You would probably response *meat*. If I then asked "What does wine and beer suggest?" You would probably respond, *drinks*, or *plant based drinks*. If I asked you what *cattle, sheep, wine, beer* suggests, you might response any type of *food* that is *land-based* [since cattle and sheep feed from land-based pasture]. Thus the theme *anything you lust for* as modified by the examples *cattle, sheep, wine, beer* implies the tithe can redeem for any edible land-based food; but they cannot use the money to purchase water, spices, or cokes. If you go back to the biblical citation at the beginning of this one-pager you will see the word *anything* underlined. *Anything* is expansive and allows purchase of *spices*. But water, cokes, and non-edibles may not be purchased with the redemption money.