

The Rashi Database Project

GOALS: * Show that all Rashid comments are spontaneous, instant, effortless reactions of a native speaker to the biblical text.

*This is accomplished by skillful English translations instantly suggesting the Rashi comment to the reader PUBLICATION:
www.Rashibyomi.com/The_Rashi_Database_Project.htm from the Rashi website www.Rashiyomi.com

MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY: DT = Doctoral Thesis (www.Rashiyomi.com/Rashibook.htm,

MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashid (www.Rashiyom.com/Rashibook2.htm)}

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THEME, THIS ISSUE: Rashi explains how construct e.g. milk of sheep is punctuated

RASHI ID: Gn01-01b, Gn07-14a, Gn24-02a, Gn29-27a, Ex05-16b, Ex28-11a, Lv22-10b, Nu06-06b, Nu04-43c, Dt25-02c, Dt32-13h, Dt32-14f

PESHAT: THE SPONTANEOUS REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

WHAT IS NEW IN THIS ISSUE: *This issue was motivated by a new series on Grammar found on the AlHatorah website at https://alhatorah.org/Index:Grammar_Topics#InteractiveLearningModules. The AlHatorah website is a website providing free access to a wide variety of biblical commentaries. One can pick a verse and read 2-3 dozen commentaries on it. The website has other Jewish sources also. Another website with similarly many Jewish sources is the Sefaria website.*

There is a new unit on the AlHatorah website explaining basic grammar. I volunteered to review this unit and am doing so by collecting Rashi comments illustrating the grammar. The digest on Grammar-Prepositions a few weeks ago corresponded to the Preposition unit of this grammar. The current digest on Rashi commenting on the construct corresponds to the Construct unit of this series.

The Website owners said my Rashi examples are illuminating and expressed intent to incorporate them. Note, my website typically defends Rashi over other commentaries. The AlHatorah website is more neutral simply presenting alternate opinions. One way they may incorporate my Rashi comments is to show how other commentaries interpreted these verses differently than Rashi.

There are currently 12 units; this is the 2nd I am commenting on. So perhaps there will be up to 12 such digests. I typically will not comment until I have found about a dozen Rashi comments illustrating the principles.

The AlHatorah series addresses basic grammar. It has the following advantages: (i) it is free (ii) despite it being comprehensive in what it covers it is brief and compact, (iii) it is in English with Hebrew words in Hebrew, (iv) it has frequent exercises to help those readers who wish to practice.

We now return to what is new in this week's digest. This week's digest presents about a dozen Rashi comments where Rashi's comment emanates from the construct state of the target word commented on. In English Construct refers to a form with the word of. For example, the jacket of John, the lunch of Mary, the house of the Schwartzs. While English uses of to indicate the construct, biblical Hebrew uses a different punctuation and vocalization to indicate a construct. In the dozen Rashis reviewed Rashi typically explains the different punctuations and how they correspond to a construct meaning.

Rashi differed from other medieval commentators and in fact modern grammar books in several ways:

- i. *Other grammarians use the terms **Somaych** and **Nismach** to indicate construct. Rashi uses the term **Davuk**, literally meaning clinging.*

- ii. *The traditional textbook style is to state theory up front and then gives exercises and examples. Rashi's style is different. Rashi uses a case-by-case approach with theory indicated in one or two main Rashis, which I call the Metropolis Rashi with the other Rashis just illustrating the basic principles.*
- iii. *The Metropolitan Rashis for construct occur at (i) Gn29-27a the only Rashi where Rashi makes explicit that besides construct having its own punctuation it also must agree in gender and at (ii) Ex28-11a one of the few Rashi where besides noting the punctuation, Rashi gives multiple illustrative examples from across Tanakh.*

The Metropolitan area approach of Rashi pedagogy uses the term Metropolitan area as a metaphor. Metropolitan areas refer to areas with a big central city with lots of more rural cities surrounding it. The central city is called the Metropolis. However, because folks in the rural cities travel frequently for employment, shopping, and medical appointments to the Metropolis the entire area is considered one unit. In biblical exegesis, Rashi will frequently have one central Rashi with many examples and explanations. We call this the Metropolis Rashi. There may be several other identical Rashi comments on other verses where Rashi simply tersely gives the explanation without any more examples and reasons. In my doctoral thesis I advocated that more important than manuscripts is identifying the Metropolis of each Rashi which then serves to illuminate all the other similar Rashi comments. We double asterisk the Metropolis of these Rashi in the list of Rashi verses.

Rashi Verses: Gn01-01b,Gn07-14a,Gn24-02a,Gn29-27a(*),Ex05-16b,Ex28-11a(*),Lv22-10b,Nu06-06b,Nu04-43c,Dt25-02c,Dt32-13h,Dt32-14f

Rashi Rule: Grammar – Construct

Rashi Comment: The Main Rashi, the Metropolis, are at Gn29-28a and Ex05-16b. Rashi explains that *construct* has (i) special punctuation and (ii) must agree with gender with the word it is connect to. Rashi brings several examples: *artisan of stone, artisan of wood, artisan of metal*. Rashi shows that Laban told Jacob who was double crossed on the wife he received that *if you fill out this set of seven days (post wedding party) we will give you the other daughter as a second wife*. Rashi rejects the interpretation *if you work another week of years we will give you the other daughter* (Rashi rejects this because of gender agreement). Also of interest is that Rashi rejects the interpretation of Gn01-01 as *In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth* since the word for *beginning* is in construct *beginning of* without it being connected to anything. Rashi explains that constructs without attached words acquire new meanings (three examples are given in the digest) and the verse really should be interpreted *For the sake of the choicest (in mankind) God created the Heaven (Spiritual world) and Earth (Physical world)*. Here the phrase *beginning of* without any following word means *choicest, best*.

Verse	Verse Text	Rashi's comments	Type of Rashi
Gn29-27a	Laban tells Jacob after switching wives: "Fulfill the 7 (days) of Leah and we will give you also Rachel	Rashi explains that "seven of" is construct and refers to the seven post-wedding party days. Rashi notes that constructs have different punctuations and must agree in gender with the word they are connected to ("Week" is masculine while "7 days of" is feminine)	Metropolis
Ex28-11a	The Ephod was the "work of an artisan of stone"	Rashi explains that the punctuation indicates a construct and hence the translation "artisan of stone" Rashi brings many other examples ("artisan of wood", "artisan of steel")	Metropolis
Gn24-02a	Abraham summoned Eliezer the elder of his house	Rashi explains that elder of and elder (without of) receive different punctuations	Routine
Nu06-06b	Let the Nazarite lets grow the wildness of his heads hair	Rashi explains that "wildness of" is construct. Rashi further explains that at a minimum 30 days is required of hair growth to become wild	Routine

Nu04-43c	The refuge cities are set aside: three near the Jordan, the place of the "rising of the sun"	Rashi explains that "rising of" is construct and hence the phrase refers to the place of rising of the sun (Eastern side)	Routine
Dt32-13h	God nursed the Jews with oil from strong rocks	Literally the verse says "from the strength of rocks". Rashi explains that strong is punctuated in the construct.	Routine
Dt32-14f	God nursed the Jews with the milk of penned animals	Rashi simply explains that "milk of penned animals" is punctuated as a construct	Routine
Ex05-16b	The Jews complained to Pharaoh that they had to build without having raw materials and this is "a sin (to) your nation"	Rashi explains that if the word was construct it would read "sin of your nation" implying fault to the Jews; since the non-construct is used it means "sin (to) your nation" implying fault to Pharaoh	Non Construct implies blame
Gn07-14a	Noah takes into the ark ...any creature with feather-likes on their limbs	Rashi derives the translation from the use of the construct. Rashi explains that verse includes grasshoppers besides birds and flying insects.	Novelty (construct implies extra cases)
Gn01-01b	For the sake of the choicest God creating the heaven (spiritual world) and earth (physical world). The earth was formless and void	Rashi explains that the word RayShith meaning beginning is in construct "beginning of" without it connect to anything. Hence the verse could not be translated "In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth" Rashi explores constructs without words they are connected to and shows they have independent meaning: (i) "woman of" is an idiom for "married woman; (ii) "end of" is an idiom for the reward and payments for service; (iii) "beginning of" means the "choicest and best"	Novelty (construct without a follow up implies new meaning)
Lv22-10b	The worker and resident of a Priest may not eat Priestly gifts	Since it is obvious that a day laborer would not be allowed to eat Priestly food, "worker" and "resident of Priest" refer to workers with exclusivity (can't work elsewhere) in their contracts (Sometimes called "slaves"). Then a "resident of a priest" would refer to a worker who works till Jubilee while "worker" would refer to a worker whose exclusivity contract ends in 7 years. Both of these may not eat Priestly food. Rashi explains that "resident of Priest" is in the construct and so refers to someone unique to that priest	Novelty (Rashi explains strange idioms)
Dt25-02c	The judges lash the convicted within the "count of" 40 they hit, no more	Rashi explains that "count of" is construct and therefore connects the two verses: "The judge lashes within the number of 40..." Hence "within the number of 40" but not 40 or above so that the maximum is 39 lashes	Novelty (Rashi unites two verses)