

# 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 Rashid comment to the reader

\* Additionally, each Rashid comment is examined using the 10 organs of the Rashid anatomy.

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

MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashi ([www.Rashiyom.com/Rashibook2.htm](http://www.Rashiyom.com/Rashibook2.htm) )}

OTHER COMMENTATORS (ABBREVIATIONS): R=Ramban, T=Baal Turim, K=Kli Yakar, I=Ibn Ezra, H=Hendel

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**RASHI ID: Ex01-07a, Ex01-10a, Ex01-11a, Ex01-11b, Ex01-12c, Ex01-15a,  
Ex01-16a, Ex01-16b, Ex01-21a, Ex02-01b, Ex01-20a, Ex01-11d**

## PESHAT, SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

**RASHIS EXPLAINING WORDS:** We will continue with the *routine* Rashi comments begun recently. Although there are already encyclopedic works documenting Rashi's rich approach to dictionary meaning such as Avineri's *Rashi's Palace*, my emphasis will be on the half dozen principles and figures of speech used to explain meaning. Additionally, as done in my doctoral thesis, I will emphasize that *peshat* the straightforward meaning of the text coincides with what reading literacy examinations test.

The techniques covered in this *routine Rashi* series are: *Metonymy, hypernymy, synecdoche, meronymy, root meaning, grammar, parallelism, the paragraph, and reading literacy*. By repeatedly emphasizing these principles and reinforcing them with English examples it is hoped that the reader will acquire a natural skill for these approaches thereby leading to greater Rashi appreciation.

## TABLE OF RASHI COMMENTS EXPLAINING WORDS

Verse	Text	Eng. Translation	Meaning of Root	Technique	Comment	Notes
Ex01-07a	<i>Va yish re tzu</i>	Jews swarmed	insect	Denominative / Simulative	To guard = to do the act of a guard; to insectify = to do the act of insects (Swarm)	A) Rashi form + My approach
Ex01-10a	<i>Va Ya Kutz zu</i>	thorn in my side	thorn	Denominative / Simulative	To guard = to simulate the act of a guard (guarding); to thorn = to simulate the thorn - to repel (cf. the English <i>Repulsive</i> )	
Ex01-11a	<i>Ha va</i>	Note this:	same as translation	Grammar	Rashi did not have word for "interjection" so he spoke about "nuance of attention" This really means interjection	
Ex01-11b	<i>Me yal doth</i>	deliver, give birth	born	Grammar	Modern grammarians believe that the Piel conjugation can refer to the causative. Rashi here disagrees. The Piel in this	

					verse refers to the <i>teamwork</i> of the midwives and mothers. Piel traditionally indicates intensity; in this verse it indicates intensity by referring to the teamwork of midwife and mother.	
Ex01-12c	<i>Ya led chen</i>	deliver, give birth	born	Grammar	Modern grammarians believe that the Piel conjugation can refer to the causative. Rashi here disagrees. The Piel in this verse refers to the <i>teamwork</i> of the midwives and mothers. Piel traditionally indicates intensity; in this verse it indicates intensity by referring to the teamwork of midwife and mother.	
Ex01-15a	<i>Va Yay teev....la me yal doth</i>	Benefited them	Good	Grammar	Rashi explains that the verb is in causative ( <i>benefited</i> rather than <i>good</i> )	
Ex01-16a	<i>Soof</i>	Reeds	End	Eymology: Locative - Spatial Form	Reeds are characterized by "only having ends (and no middle)" NOTE: Modern scholars explain "Reeds grow at the <i>end</i> of Marsh")	
Ex01-16b	<i>Ur ee them al Ha Avnayim</i>	Stone	Stone	Eymology: Naming by what it is made from	e.g. "Linoleum (Floor)" or "glass" of water" (Rashi: Cf. Jr18-03: "Stone" is name of manufacture table)	B) Radak's approach
Ex01-21a	<i>Va Ya as la hem ba tim</i>	honor; good name	House	Synecdoche	Cf. "Made him a palace"=made him king"; "house" = location associated with people of distinction and honor	C) Property as determining human rights
Ex02-01b	<i>Shnay a na shim Nitzzim</i>	Two people fighting	Sparks	Synecdoche	Cf. English "They made sparks with each other"	
Ex01-20a	<i>Sa ray Mis sim</i>	Tax officials	Tax	Synecdoche	"Tax" can refer to taking services (building cities); it usually (synecdoche - good example) refers to taking money	D) What is bothering Rashi approach

Ex01-11d	<i>A ray Mis Ke Noth</i>	Fortified cities	Shelter	Synecdoche	The root means <i>shelter</i> ; By synecdoche it can refer to <i>providing warmth or giving benefit</i> By <i>metonymy it can refer to the homeless</i> (who needs shelter)
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## NOTES FROM TABLE:

A) Rashi literally says *they gave birth to six children at a time*. This has led some to erroneously think that Rashi was commenting on the six words in the verse i) fruitful, ii) multiply, iii) swarm, iv) become backbones, v) very vi) very (much).

However, Rashi never plays such *counting* games. Rather as I have explained in my thesis the *six at a time* is the Rashi *form* in which he expresses himself. The actual simple meaning of the verse is that the Jews *swarmed* and multiplied quickly.

One can still ask, “So why didn’t the verse simply say, *the Jews swarmed and filled the land*” What is the purpose of all the extra verbs and adverbs (*fruitful, backboneed etc.* ) While this is a good and correct question it is not the question Rashi deals with. Rashi only comments on the word *swarmed*. Literally, the word should be translated *insectified* a denominative meaning *behaving like insects that multiply*.

My own opinion is that the four verbs in the verse refer to different approaches to the number of children in a family.

- *Fruitful* would have a nuance of one or two children who would appear like a fruit hanging from a tree. When there are a small number of children each one can be given individual attention.
- *Swarmed* would have a nuance of many children at once. There is more of an emphasis on building a community without the opportunity of individually attending to each child.
- *Backboned* would have a nuance of being a *backbone* or *pillar* in the community. It could refer to a situation where children are married off very young so that within 50 years you might see 4 generations of children (The emphasis is on multi-generational children rather than a lot of children in each birth).
- *Multiply* would have a nuance of *many*. It would not be as much as *swarmed and backboneed* but would be more than *fruitful*.

The point here is that each type of family (individual attention to children, multi-children families, swarming, and backbones) makes contributions to the overall society. The text then indicates that the Jewish community had multiple family types.

B) Radak interpreted *avnayim* as the womb from the root *beth-nun*, child. Radak argues that the midwives would know the gender while the baby is coming out. However, Rashi gives a precedent for naming a workspace by what it is made of (In Jeremiah 18:3, the artisan workspace is called the stone. Additionally, the verse could simply mean *see and watch the delivery table* and not necessarily mean to literally wait to see when the child comes out

C) Interestingly, until recently, people with property were considered the *citizens* while people without property had lesser rights. This distinction affected even serious crimes like theft and murder.

D) One can use here the *what is bothering Rashi* approach. The verse speaks about tax officials but does not mention taking any monetary taxes: *Pharoh appointed tax officials; the Jews built fortified cities for Pharoh*. Rashi therefore explained the *tax* as referring the service of building. That of course is correct but the linguistic justification for calling a service like building a city, tax, is the figure of speech, synecdoche, wherein monetary tax is a *good example* (synecdoche) of *tax* which can refer to levying any type of item of worth.