

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.

PUBLICATION: www.Rashibyomi.com/RashiDatabase.htm

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

MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashi (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: Ex13-17a, Ex13-17b, Ex13-18a, Ex13-18c, Ex14-03b, Ex14-03c, Ex14-07a, Ex14-07c, Ex14-24b, Ex14-24d

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.

Additionally, one purpose of this series is to show that most Rashi comments are not subject to the usual criticisms that he frequently engaged in *homily*. Many Rashi comments illuminate word meaning and usage often with novelty that readers may not have been aware of.

In response to reader comments, ["We find the tables very hard to read"] I have re-designed the Tables to reflect a more friendly interface. As usual feel free to write: Remember: This is *your* email list; I write for you not for myself.

This week's Table of Rashi comments may be found beginning on the next page.

Verse	Translation of Verse with Rashi	Rule	Brief Explanation of Rule
Ex13-17a	When Pharaoh let the nation go, God did not gently-guide [lit. gentle] them through Philistine lands lest the nation have regrets because of the sight of all the military activities and they would want to return to Egypt	Hypernymy	The Hebrew root used, Nun-Cheth-Hey means gentle. However, the context of the verse indicates some type of movement-guidance. Rashi simply notes this: Gentle means guide them gently. More deeply, the parent category of guiding movements [hypernym] has many children types [hyponyms] of movements such as gently-guiding, quickly guiding, etc. Thus, Rashi really is indicating that the text coins an idiom: gently-guide using the verb gentle
Ex13-17b	When Pharaoh let the nation go, God did not gently-guide them through Philistine lands lest the nation have regrets because of the sight of all the military activities and they would want to return to Egypt	Grammar Unified Meaning	The Hebrew root Nun-Cheth-Mem has two meanings: i) console, and ii) regret. They have in common that both refer to a change of attitude. In regret the person regretting initiates this change of attitude by regretting a past action. In console other parties attempt to persuade the consoled person to accept to change their attitude that the deceased is alive; they console him and make him aware of the deceased's death and urge him to remember him/her and the positive influence they had.
Ex13-18a	God steered [lit. circled] the nation towards the Sea of Reeds	Synecdoche	The Hebrew root Samech-Beth-Beth refers to encirclement. As an adjective it would mean surrounded. As a verb it should mean to go around in circles. By synecdoche, it also means to steer since going around in circles is a good example [synecdoche] of steering.

<p>Ex13-18c</p>	<p><i>A fifth [cheth-mem-shin] of the Jews left Egypt</i></p>	<p>Metonymy - Synecdoche</p>	<p><i>The Hebrew root cheth-mem-shin means five. From this root we obtain the grammatically related meaning [metonymy] of one-fifth. Rashi cites this explanation from the Bamidbar Rabbah. But Rashi also cites that the commonly accepted meaning of cheth-mem-shin is armed and even brings Aramaic precedents. This can be explained by synecdoche. A good example [synecdoche] of five is the hand which has five fingers. In English, a person holding a weapon (or to whom a weapon is accessible on him) is said to be armed since the arm is a good example [synecdoche] of use of weapons. In Hebrew we say the person is handed or more precisely fived. Rashi appears to say that the simple meaning is armed, and the homiletic meaning is one fifth. But in my doctoral thesis I show that the simple meaning is armed. Rashi calls it Derash because Derash can indicate nuanced simple meaning. The translation of armed is really the reading of a simpleton ignorant of reading comprehension. For the primary source of meaning is context not the dictionary. In this case the previous verse said the Jews (who were slaves) were frightened by military activities; it wouldn't make sense based on context to say they were armed. Furthermore, the previous verse says that the Jews were so frightened by military activities that they would want to return to Egypt to slavery!!! Clearly, they were emotionally weak. Rashi's translation of one fifth is now pregnant with meaning. Four fifths of the Jews died during the plagues and only one fifth left and even this fifth could easily be persuaded to return</i></p>
<p>Ex14-03b</p>	<p><i>Pharoh will think concerning [lit. to] the Jews that they are confused on direction</i></p>	<p>Grammar Pronouns</p>	<p><i>Hebrew uses prefix letters - beth- caph-lamed- mem (BiChLaM) - to indicate prepositional connectives. Although each letter has a primary meaning, the meanings all interchange. For example, the primary meaning of a lamed before a word is to; In this verse this primary meaning would lead to the absurd translation Pharoh will say to the Jews. Rashi explains that the prefix lamed in this verse means concerning or about. For this reason, we have translated say as think which is more appropriate (since he wasn't necessarily talking to anyone) Thus, the verse is translated, Pharoh will think concerning the Jews</i></p>

Ex14-03c	<i>Pharoh will think about the Jews that they are depressively confused on direction</i>	Root Meanings	<i>[Directly from my doctoral thesis] The Hebrew root Beth-Vav-Caph means confused. Rashi scholars believe that the root of the Hebrew word in this verse. But Rashi gives examples from other roots with Beth and caph such as Beth-Caph-Hey. This has led Rashi scholars to say that Rashi was a product of his times and believed in two letter roots (a theory that was popular around Rashi's times and had recently been replaced with a uniform three-letter root theory). My position is that Rashi recognizes a new verb root here Nun-Beth-Caph. Rashi explains that while Beth-Vav-Caph means confused, Nun-Beth-Caph means depressively confused, that is, a confusion, where the confused person gives up and stops trying. This suggested new root and its meaning would fit in nicely with the other verses that Rashi cites. For example, the verse in Job would be translated Could you come to the whirlpools the whirlpool being an example of an oceanic encounter that leaves you depressively confused that is incapable of further action.</i>
Ex14-07a	<i>Pharoh took 600 choicest chariots (lit. selected chariots)</i>	Metonymy	The Hebrew root Beth-Cheth-Resh means to select. By metonymy it refers to the choicest and best since those are the things that one typically selects (metonymy) . Rashi also explains the anomalous combination of plural and singular. The verse says 600 implying plural but then uses the singular to describe the choicest. Rashi explains that grammar allows use of the singular for the plural when one wants to emphasize that each chariot was choicest (not just most of them).
Ex14-07c	<i>Captains [lit. 3rds] over all forces</i>	Metonymy	Generals are first in command. Majors are 2nd in command and are assigned to each region of the army. The individual forces are governed by captains who report to the majors who know the guidelines of the generals. Thus, the captains are typically 3rd in command and hence the Hebrew word for captain comes from the Hebrew root meaning three.
Ex14-24b	<i>God scanned [lit. doorposted] on them</i>	Hypernymy	Both Hebrew and English have many words meaning looking over. One type of looking over is a wide range scan. This is typically done to assess situations. Hebrew derives the word for a high-range scan from the word doorpost since the doorpost top is typically higher and would correspond to the scanning operation.
Ex14-24d	<i>God tumulted them</i>	Denominatives	Just as from the noun tango we obtained the verb to tango, from the noun hospital we obtain the verb to hospitalize, from the noun tumult we obtain the verb tumulted. The grammatical term for changing a noun into a verb is denominative. Rashi also cites the Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer that the core of a tumult is the noise.

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