

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 Rashid (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: Ex28-31a, Ex28-31b, Ex28-32a, Ex28-32b, Ex28-32c, Ex28-33a, Ex28-33b, Ex28-32d, Ex28-34a, Ex28-33d

PESHAT: SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

WHAT IS NEW: *This week's reviews a fascinating Rashi-Ramban-Ibn Ezra controversy. Ramban's explanation appears totally absurd; ArtScroll comes to the rescue and points out that the controversy is based on two variant readings of the Talmud. I in turn show that Rashi did not base himself on the Talmud but on sound grammatical principles.*

Exciting!!!

NEW FORMAT: *Starting today we will no longer be using the spreadsheet to include long narratives. Rather we link the spreadsheet to a word document with the narrative. LET ME KNOW HOW YOU THE READER LIKE THIS (Simply hit REPLY to the email and write in the SUBJECT LINE either LIKE, PREFER OLD WAY, INDIFFERENT). There will be many more formatting innovations in the coming months and we look forward to readers for feedback.*

TODAYS CHALLENGING RASHIS

Ex28-33d

Ex28-33d, Ex28-34a (The hem of the priestly azure suit should consist of) pomegranates and golden anvils inside them. A golden anvil and pomegranate, a gold anvil and pomegranate on the hems of the priestly azure suit surrounding it.

Rashi Rule: Meaning -> Synecdoche, Grammar -> Connective words

Rashi Narrative: The verse says that the hem of the suit had pomegranates and golden anvils inside them. The word *inside* could have two meanings:

* It could mean literally *inside* them. So that inside each pomegranate was a golden anvil (Ramban)

* It could mean *between* or *amongst* them so that between every two pomegranates there was a golden anvil amongst them (Rashi, Ibn Ezra citing the Talmud TB Zevachim 88b, Rashi on Zevachim 88b explicitly says "the word *inside* does not mean *inside* but *amongst*, Oonkelos, Rambam, and Book of Big Mitzvoth (Sefer Mitzvoth Gedoloth), and Rashbam).

To clarify these two meanings, recall that the Figure of Speech *synecdoche* says that words can

acquire meanings of things they are good examples of, for example, *honey* referring to *bee honey* has come to mean *anything sweet* since *honey* is a good example of *sweetness*. The word *inside* originally means inside a space (e.g. the orange juice is inside the container). However, being *inside* is a good example of being amongst and hence *inside* can refer to any inclusion even if there is no 3 dimensional space involved; for example, *there was a young couples section inside the orchestra seats*.

Rashi determines the meaning of this ambiguous word by studying the connectives in the next verse, Ex28-34. There are several possibilities of connectives

(Actual verse) A golden anvil <i>and</i> pomegranate an anvil <i>and</i> pomegranate
(Alternative) A golden anvil <i>inside</i> (<i>Hebrew be</i>) a pomegranate; an anvil <i>inside</i> a pomegranate
(Alternative) A golden anvil and <i>its</i> pomegranate (<i>pa'amon zahav ve'remono</i>), an anvil and <i>its</i> pomegranate

Table Ex28-34d: Three possible connectives *and*, *inside*, *its* connecting the *bells* and *pomegranate.s*

Because the verse chose the connective word *and*, indicating a collection of similar items, Rashi concludes that the suit hem consisted of alternating golden anvils and pomegranates without either being subordinate (e.g. golden anvils inside the pomegranates).

It is interesting comparing the styles of Ibn Ezra and Rashi. Rashi puts his comment on Ex28-34a thereby indicating the underlying textual cue leading to his interpretation. Contrastively, Ibn Ezra simply cites *our ancient ones (the Talmudic sages)* without citing supportive reasons.

Also interesting is that in this case, Ibn Ezra and Rashbam defend the Talmudic Midrashic approach while Ramban gives a perhaps literal interpretation, a reversal of stereotyped roles.

Why then did the Ramban argue as he did? He does ask some questions but the Mizrahi refutes them easily. The Artscroll notes to its translation on Zevachim explains:

There are two versions of the Talmudic text:
* *One version says that they bring 72 pomegranates and bells and let them hang from it (the suit)*
* *An alternate version says that they bring 72 pomegranates and bells and let them hang from them*

In other words the Artscroll commentary makes the Ramban-Rashi controversy dependent on the text of the Talmud: If the text says to hang the bells from it (referring to the suit) then the bells were just like the pomegranates, hanging from the suit, and not inside them. But if the text says to hang the bells from them (referring to the pomegranates) then the bells would have been inside the pomegranates. Artscroll argues that Ramban had before him the text *bells having from them* while Artscroll conjectures that Rashi had before him the text *bells hanging from it (the suit)*. Note also, that the Mizrahi in his criticism of Ramban explicitly cites the text of the Talmud as saying *hang the bells from it* which according to Artscroll is not the version that the Ramban had.

I accept the Artscroll explanation of the Ramban. But I reject the idea that Rashi held his view because of a particular Talmudic text. In fact, Rashi was a student of Rabbaynu Gershom the Light of the Exile. Both Rabbaynu Gershom and Rashi studied many Talmudic variants and

attempted to produce the correct reading. Much of our current version of the Talmud is owed to the painstaking work of Rabbaynu Gershom and Rashi.

Additionally, Rashi, as I just showed in Table Ex28-34d, based himself on the biblical text which explicitly uses a connective *and* denoting *equal placement* and avoids several other connectives (such as the prefix *be* which would indicate *inside*) denoting subordination.

DATABASE ENTRIES

The Free Downloadable Excel based database is found at
http://www.Rashiyomi.com/The_Rashi_Database_Project.xls

VERSE: Ex28-31a
TRANSLATION: *Make the suit (me'il) of the vest (breast plate) entirely azure*
METHOD: Grammar --> Construct State
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-31b
TRANSLATION: *Make the suit (me'il) of the vest (breast plate) entirely azure*
METHOD: Synonyms, Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-32a
TRANSLATION: *And the mouth of its head shall be inside it, woven, like the mouth of armor shields, it should not be torn. And make on its hem, azure, purple, wool-died pomegranates with golden hammers.*
METHOD: Synonyms, Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-32b
TRANSLATION: *And the mouth of its head shall be inside it, woven, like the mouth of armor shields, it should not be torn. And make on its hem, azure, purple, wool-died pomegranates with golden hammers.*
METHOD: Synonyms, Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-32c
TRANSLATION: *And the mouth of its head shall be inside it, woven, like the mouth of armor shields, it should not be torn. And make on its hem, azure, purple, wool-died pomegranates with golden hammers.*

METHOD: Synonyms, Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-33a
TRANSLATION: *And the mouth of its head shall be inside it, woven, like the mouth of armor shields, it should not be torn. And make on its hem, azure, purple, wool-died pomegranates with golden hammers.*

METHOD: Synonyms, Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-33b
TRANSLATION: *And the mouth of its head shall be inside it, woven, like the mouth of armor shields, it should not be torn. And make on its hem, azure, purple, wool-died pomegranates with golden hammers.*

METHOD: Synonyms, Parallelism
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-32d
TRANSLATION: *And the mouth of its head shall be inside it, woven, like the mouth of armor shields, it should not be torn.*

METHOD: Rabbi Ishmael
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-31a](#)

VERSE: Ex28-34a
TRANSLATION: *(The hem of the priestly azure suit should consist of) pomegranates and golden anvils inside them. A golden anvil and pomegranate, a gold anvil and pomegranate on the hems of the priestly azure suit surrounding it.*

METHOD: Meaning -> Synecdoche, Grammar -> Connective words
BRIEF EXPLANATION: [Ex28-33d](#)

VERSE: Ex28-33d

TRANSLATION:

(The hem of the priestly azure suit should consist of) pomegranates and golden anvils inside them. A golden anvil and pomegranate, a gold anvil and pomegranate on the hems of the priestly azure suit surrounding it.

METHOD:

Meaning -> Synecdoche, Grammar -> Connective words

BRIEF

[Ex28-33d](#)

EXPLANATION:

