

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: Gn32-25b Gn33-13d Gn33-14b Gn34-08a

PESHAT, SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

ROUTINE RASHIS: There are many Rashi comments that are *routine*, that is either they explain *dictionary meaning* or *basic sentence and verb grammar*. In such a case it is useful to compare the modern treatment of this word or grammatical point with what Rashi says. There are four such Rashi comments in today's Parshah.

- 1) [Jacob and Esauv had just met after a long separation. Esauv offers to travel with Jacob. Jacob explains that such travel if rushed would hurt his flocks which have many young ones who cannot be rushed. Jacob makes a counteroffer] Would my master [Esauv] please go before me while I wish to travel more gently consistent with my flocks and children.

The verb travel has an extra terminal *hey* attached to it. The modern grammatical theory explains that this terminal *hey* indicates the subjunctive mood (The ordinary indicative mood describes or indicates items in the real world while the subjunction mood describes my internal world and indicates such things as wishes and commands].

Rashi simply says, “There is an extra *hey* at the end of the verb to travel” (and gives some examples). The question arises whether Rashi was aware that terminal *heys* indicate wishes.

Although he doesn't say so here explicitly a contribution in my doctoral thesis is that to understand Rashi's position one should look at many similar Rashis since Rashi may explicitly state the principle once but not on each Rashi comment. In this case Ex15-01 contains the word sing with a terminal *hey* so it means I wish to sing. Rashi on Ex15-01 comments on the future conjugation (They Moses and the Jewish people “Yashir” (Future conjugation of sing). Rashi points out that the future which modern grammarians call the tense that lacks perfection can either indicate a future action (so the imperfection is that it hasn't happened yet), the habitual (so the imperfection is that the verb activity is never completed because it is repeatedly done) or the subjunctive (so the imperfection is because the singing is in my mind and not in the real world. In this verse, Ex15-01 the verse could mean i) The Jews will sing in the future upon resurrection, ii) the Jews habitually sing, iii) The Jews(overwhelmed with emotion) wished to sing. As I just indicated

the terminal *hey* on the verb to sing does indicate *wish*. So, it appears Rashi was aware of this approach.

Another support that Rashi knew this is that the verse uses *please*: *Please my master [Esau] go first before me* so that the contrastive statement of what Jacob wishes to do is indeed seen as a wish.

In any event we have an interesting phenomenon here that although Rashi simply dismisses the *hey* as extra there is evidence that he is aware of its subjunctive nature.

- 2) On Gn34-08, Schem who had raped Dinah, Jacob's daughter, and wanted to marry her is speaking to Jacob through his father. *My son Schem's soul chashkah in your daughter*. Rashi simply explains that *chashkah* means *wants*.

But a deeper analysis (by looking at many verses where *chashkah* and *chafetz* occur) seems to suggest that *chafetz* means *want* while *chashkah* might mean *desire* or *has a crush*.

In my doctoral thesis I show that when Rashi is explaining synonyms in a parent category, for example, the parent category of *want* has many illustrative items *desire*, *crush*, *passion*, Rashi will prefer to translate using the parent term. The technical jargon for parent category and items is hypernym and hyponyms.

I explain that Rashi dealt with the masses who did not have a good vocabulary. Rashi thought that explaining detailed nuances may be more than his readers could absorb. In such a case Rashi will explain the detailed item, *desire*, in terms of the parent category without going into details.

I think it obvious that Rashi who was well versed in all of the Bible and both Talmuds certainly knew the differences of nuance between *want* and *desire*. This approach to Rashi sheds light on how we are supposed to read such Rashis. Despite what Rashi says, we must review verses and to see if more nuanced translations exist.

- 3) Gn32-25d, Gn33-13d. The word *avak* means *dust*. From this we get the verb *to dust* referring to a wrestling match (which raises a lot of dust). The word *dofeyk* means *reverberating*. The verb *to reverberate* would refer to periodic activity.

These two examples illustrate a grammatical phenomenon called the denominative. The denominative uncovers how a noun can become a verb. Gottfurcht in her doctoral thesis found eight methods by which nouns becomes verbs: 1) *to flower* to create flowers (putative method), 2) *to dust* to remove dust (privative method), 3) *to hammer* to use the hammer (instrumental method), 4) *to guard* to imitate the activities of the guard (simulative method), 5) *to tango*, to perform the tango, (performative method), 6) *to jewel* to decorate with jewels (the ornamental method), 7) *to shell* to remove shells (ablative method), and 8) *to hospitalize* to place in a hospital (*locative method*).

Rashi was in fact aware of denominatives as we find on Nu04-13b (*to dust with a dustpan* which Rashi explains *to remove the dust* the private method). So, I felt that explaining *to dust* as *to wrestle* (putative method, to create dust) and explaining *to reverberate* as *to create a periodic repetitive motion* (simulative method) is straightforward.

Rashi does explain *to reverberate* this way. He cites the Aramaic translation of *to dust* which uses the denominative method. However, he then turns around and says “But I believe it is Aramaic (and then Rashi cites the Aramaic)” I find this perplexing since the meaning can be explained using known grammatical principles within Hebrew itself. (I don’t have an answer to this).

<p>Biblical Texts: Gn32-25b Gn33-13d Gn33-14b Gn34-08a</p>	<p>A man <i>dusted</i> (1) with him till morning</p> <p>I have young flock and should I reverberate them even one day(2) they might die.</p> <p>[Jacob and Esauv had just met after a long separation. Esauv offers to travel with Jacob. Jacob explains that such travel if rushed would hurt his flocks which have many young ones who cannot be rushed. Jacob makes a counteroffer] Would my master [Esauv] please go before me while I <u>wish to travel</u>(3) more gently consistent with my flocks and children.</p> <p>My son’s soul Schem wants (4)</p>
<p>Rashi comments</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Routine Rashi. <i>Dusted</i> with him means <i>wrestled with him</i> since wrestling produces a lot of dust. This is an example of a denominative (a noun that becomes a verb) Rashi cites the Aramaic translation and then opines that he thinks the approach that this word is Aramaic in origin is a superior explanation. Rashi however did believe in denominatives (Nu04-13b) 2) Routine Rashi: <i>to reverberate</i> the flock refers to continual repetitive movement (like a reverberating voice) and refers to pushing the flock beyond their limits. Like in comment 1 Rashi uses the denominative approach in this case simulative since the continual walking simulates a reverberating voice 3) Although Rashi says that the terminal hey on the verb meaning to travel is extra, he knew that such terminal <i>heys</i> refer to the subjunctive for the following reasons: i) Rashi explains the terminal hey as subjunctive (I wish) in Ex15-01. ii) The first part of the verse uses the word please and hence it is logical that the 2nd part does not just indicate reality (indicative mood) but describes ones inner emotions. 4) The Hebrew word used means <i>desire, passion, has a crush</i>. However, Rashi suffices with explaining the parent category of want.

10 ORGANS OF THE RASHI ANATOMY Gn32-25b Gn33-13d Gn33-14b Gn34-08a

Organ	Brief Explanation	Rashi	My emendations
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Lemma,	Beginning words, what is Rashi commenting on	<i>Rashi simply citers the word he is translating or whose grammar he is explaining.</i>	None
Number of Rashi comments		1	1
4 Exegetical Pillars	How is Rashi deriving this comment	<i>Meaning Grammar –Subjunctive Grammar -denominatives</i>	I provide background from Gottfurcht's recent thesis.
Form	How does Rashi express his idea	Rashi does not give the full explanation on all terms i) On <i>to dust</i> he gives two explanations one based on denominatives, and one based on Aramaic ii) On the subjunctive Rashi simply says an extra hey without (on this Rashi) explaining it means the subjunctive iii) On reverberating he gives the explanation iv) On <i>desires</i> he explains the term using the parent category of <i>wanting</i> .	I have brought evidence from other Rashi that Rashi knew of these grammatical principles. Ex15-01 shows Rashi new about the subjunctive. Nu04-13 shows Rashi knew about the denominative. In general Rashi will sometimes not express nuanced meanings but just the parent category
Reasonable speculations		None	None
Consequences	Lessons learned	None	None
Language Nuances	Recognized by literate speakers	Rashi does not give them	I show that <i>want really</i> means desire I show that <i>to dust</i> means to wrestle, to produce a lot of dust I show that the terminal hey indicates my wish and not my perception of reality I show that the real meaning is desire. I bring evidence that Rashi knew these things and either left them to other Rashi comments or used simpleton explanations.
Simpleton explanations		The following are simpleton. Explaining <i>desire</i>	

		as <i>want</i> ; explaining <i>to wrestle</i> as coming from another language; not distinguishing between a statement of reality (indicative) and personal wishes	
Homily	Explanations taken out of context of verse	None	None
Moral exhortation		<i>None</i>	None