

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.Rashiyomi.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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PESHAT, SPONTANEOUS, REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

RASHI vs. MIDRASH: We will continue with the *routine* Rashid 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* Rashid 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 Rashid appreciation.

NOTE: This issue (after the first Rashi) contains 8 more combined Rashis (all speaking about the same thing) and 3 principles. The 8 Rashis are Lv26-16b, 16c, 16d, 17f, Dt22a:d. The three principles are Climax, Etymologies and Form. To understand any particular Rashi you have to read all 8 together

VERSE: Nu01-16a
TRANSLATION: *These are the congregational invitees, the governors of their tribes*
METHOD: Idioms
An idiom is a collection of words whose meaning is not just the sum of its words. For example, you can say that again is an idiom indicating you like an idea; there is no requirement to say anything again. The Biblical verb Kuph-Resh-Aleph can mean a) call, b) name, c) invite, and several other meanings. Hence the collection of words, KeRuAy HaAyDaH the invitees of the congregation or the congregational invitees refers to those people, tribal governors, who were always invited to congregational events; they were the congregational representatives.

VERSE: Nu01-18a
TRANSLATION: *Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation and recognized their birth by family and tribal house*

METHOD: Grammar Hitpael

BRIEF EXPLANATION: The Hitpael conjugation refers to actively doing something under some influence. The underlying verb Yud-Lamed-Daleth means in the indicative, to give birth, and in the subjunctive, to recognize a birth. Here Moses recognized their births under the influence of their families and tribal houses. Rashi picturesquely describes everyone bringing their birth certificate with a statement of lineage.

VERSE: Nu01-49a

TRANSLATION: *[Two interpretations] (#1) Nevertheless [despite the census] don't count the Levites (#2) Probably (you) don't have to count the Levites*

METHOD: Hononyms

BRIEF EXPLANATION: The Hebrew word Ach has two meanings: #1) It can mean nevertheless, #2) it can mean probably or usually. Remarkably, both meanings fit naturally in this verse. #1) After counting the Jewish tribes, God continues, nevertheless don't count the Levites. #2) After counting the Jewish tribes, God continues that you probably don't have to count the Levites. The counting here was done to contrast the counts after the deaths from the sin of the spies and the sins with Moab in both of which the Levites did not participate (hence they need not be counted).

VERSE: Nu01-51a

TRANSLATION: *When they journeyed, the Levites dis-assembled [lit. brought down] the Tabernacle; when they encamped the Levites re-assembled [lit. brought up]*

METHOD: Synecdoche Form

BRIEF EXPLANATION: Language will sometimes name something with a good example of it; for example, calling something sweet, honey. Naming by a good example is called synecdoche. A good example of dis-assembling something is bringing it down; a good example of re-assembling something is bringing it up. Here up and down are opposites mirroring the dis-assembling and re-assembling process. Note: It is not required that you actually bring anything down when dis-assembling; it is simply a good example, something that usually happens.

VERSE: Nu02-17c

TRANSLATION: *As they encamped so did they journey, every person with his residence-tent [lit. hand] under their [respective] flags*

METHOD: Hypernymy Synecdoche

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

There are many words meaning my place, for example, my residence, my street etc. We refer to the general category, place, as the *hypernym*, and to its various examples as *hyponyms*. The entire collection is referred to as *hypernymy*. Rashi's job is to indicate both the general category (*hypernym*) and the nuances of the particular example (*hyponym*), one's tent residence. Rashi explains this obligation (of explaining both) by stating "the word *hand* (while meaning place) does not leave its original meaning." Rashi explains that *hand* comes to mean one's personal place (i.e. tent residence) since you can grab with your hands anything in it. Here personal residence is named by a good example or characteristic of it; the ability to grab something. Naming something by a good example is called *synecdoche*.

**VERSE:
TRANSLATION:
METHOD:**

Nu03-01a

These are the disciples [lit. descendants] of Moses and Aaron

Synecdoche

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

The Hebrew word used ToLeDoTh means *descendants*. But in this verse it means *disciples*. Here the word descendant acquired the broader meaning of disciple because a descendant is a good example of a disciple. Naming something by a good example is called *synecdoche*. A similar example occurs with the word *honey* which by *synecdoche* can refer to anything sweet. Interestingly, Rashi proves that the verse cannot be literal because no *descendants* of Moses are mentioned in the following narrative.

**VERSE:
TRANSLATION:
METHOD:**

Nu04-13b

They will ash the altar

Denominative

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

Just as from the word *dust* we get the verb *to dust*, so too, from the noun *ash* we get the verb *to ash*, that is to remove the ashes. A verb made from a noun is called a *denominative*. Gutfurcht in her doctoral thesis showed 8 types of *denominatives*. *Denominatives* which remove the underlying noun like *to dust* and *to ash* are called *privative* because they deprive the noun.