

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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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.

VERSE: Nu22-08c
TRANSLATION: *Stay over tonight and I will return a response as God speaks to me; they stayed over [lit. sat] with him*
METHOD: Synecdoche
BRIEF EXPLANATION: See Lv12-04. Of the two basic positions - standing, sitting - sitting is a good example of staying in place while standing indicates a potential for action. Hence staying in place is named by a good example of it, sitting. Naming by good example is called synecdoche

VERSE: Dt09-09a
TRANSLATION: *I [Moses] stayed [lit. sat] on the mountain [with God] 40 days and 40 nights*
METHOD: Synecdoche
BRIEF EXPLANATION: See Lv12-04. Of the two basic positions - standing, sitting - sitting is a good example of staying in place while standing indicates a potential for action. Hence staying in place is named by a good example of it, sitting. Naming by good example is called synecdoche

VERSE: Nu22-03a

TRANSLATION: *Balak [King of Moab] ...saw all that Israel had done to Moab. Moab [felt] alienated [lit. was alien]*
METHOD: Metonymy
BRIEF EXPLANATION: The root Gimel-Vav-Resh means alien or foreigner. In this verse it means felt like a foreigner, that is, afraid. The process of naming items by related items is called metonymy.

VERSE: Nu22-03b
TRANSLATION: *Moab was depressed [lit. thorn-ed] from the Israelites*
METHOD: Synecdoche
BRIEF EXPLANATION: As in English, thorn in one's side, is a good example of something continuously painful. Rashi cites a verse where Rivkah referred to her idolatrous daughter in laws as thorns in her life presumably referring to depression. I think the best translation of Rashi into English would be depressed.

VERSE: Nu22-20b
TRANSLATION: *If they have personally called you for your honor you may go with them; nevertheless you can only say what I tell you*
METHOD: Conjunctions
BRIEF EXPLANATION: The word Ach has two meaning: most of and nevertheless. Nevertheless in a sentence, A nevertheless B, indicates that A seems to imply the absence of B but nevertheless B is present. In this verse God tells Bilam that he may go for his honor seemingly implying that Bilam can curse the Jewish people as requested. But God cautions him, that nevertheless, the original prohibition of cursing the Jews stays; you may only speak what I tell you.

VERSE: Nu22-20a
TRANSLATION: *If you were called by them for your honor [lit. called to you]*
METHOD: Pronouns
BRIEF EXPLANATION: The indirect pronoun Lamed Yud or Lamed Vav which is translated for me or for you indicates an activity done for personal benefit. Rashi applies this principle throughout his commentary: Ex25-02a, Ex18-27a, Ex24-21b, Ex25-08a, Nu13-02b

VERSE: Nu22-24a
TRANSLATION: *The angel stood in the fox-trail of the vineyard*
METHOD: Synecdoche

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

The word for trail comes from the word for fox. It is best translated as fox-trail. Fox trails are good examples of small narrow paths (which foxes like because they can spy and avoid bigger enemies who can't fit into the path) Naming something by a good example of it is called synecdoche.

VERSE:

Nu22-25a,b

TRANSLATION:

The donkey leg was cramped against the wall; the donkey cramped Bilam's leg against the wall

METHOD:

Grammar

**BRIEF
EXPLANATION:**

The word cramped occurs twice in this verse, once in the passive - the donkey leg was cramped - and once in the active - the donkey cramped Bilam's leg against the wall. Rashi explains the basic grammatical difference between the vocalization of these two words: Va-Til-Chatz is active (cramped someone else) while Va-Til-La-Chaytz is passive (was cramped).