

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 Rashi comment to the reader PUBLICATION:
www.Rashibyomi.com/The_Rashi_Database_Project.htm from the Rashi website www.Rashiyomi.com

MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY: DT = Doctoral Thesis (www.Rashiyomi.com/Rashibook.htm,
 MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashid (www.Rashiyom.com/Rashibook2.htm)}

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT: (c) Rashiyomi.com 2025, Dr. Russell Jay Hendel, www.Rashiyomi.com/copyrights.htm

ACCESS: The materials on this website are free; We accept no donations from anyone. Citation with Attribution is required.

DATE/AUTHOR: Jul 3rd, 2025 Russell Jay Hendel DSJS, Ph.D.

VERSION NUMBER: Version 2, 2025 (v1,2023)

**RASHI ID: Gn14-14a, Gn14-14b, Ex02-06b, Ex02-14a, Gn37-03b, Gn41-12b,
 Gn27-27a, Gn14-24a (Synonyms), Gn14-23a, Gn14-23b (Parallelism),
 Gn14-24a (Parallelism), Gn13-17a (Paragraphs)**

PESHAT: THE SPONTANEOUS REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

WHAT IS NEW IN THIS ISSUE: We place the following 12 Rashi comments into the lists indicated
 - We especially bring to your attention the controversy between Rashi and Ibn Ezra on Gn13-17a.

VERSES: Gn14-14a

Gn14-14a	He [Abraham] girded [for war his mentees	Synecdoche	A defining characteristic of a soldier is the <i>unleashing of the sword</i> when he draws the sword out of his sheath. We could describe this as <i>emptying his sheath of the sword</i> and hence <i>emptying</i> synecdochally means <i>unleashing</i> and by meronymy refers to <i>girding</i> (preparing) for war. Thus the verse translates: Abraham <i>prepared</i> his mentees for war. Rashi does not give this etymology based on synecdoche; rather he cites many verses where the verb to <i>empty</i> refers to preparation and activities of soldiers.
----------	--	------------	--

VERSES: Gn14-14b, Ex02-06b, Ex02-14a, Gn37-03b, Gn41-12b, Gn27-27a, Gn14-24a (Synonyms)

Gn14-14b	2	Throughout language	The Hebrew <i>cha-ni-chauv</i> refers to mentees, apprentices,	<i>Chet-Nun-Caph</i> is the biblical word for <i>training</i> and <i>education</i> . As a noun it refers to <i>apprentices</i> or <i>mentees</i> , In Gn14-14b states that Abraham prepared those servants of his that he was training for the war to liberate his nephew.
Ex02-06b, Ex02-14a, Gn37-02b, Gn41-12b, Gn27-27a, Gn14-24a	2	Throughout language	<i>Na-ar</i> , child, or teenage, refers to an intermediate stage between <i>babyhood</i> and <i>adulthood</i> .	<i>a) Hence when contrasted to babyhood it means stronger than a baby e.g. baby crying like a na-ar (Ex02-06b), but b) when contrasted to adulthood it can mean either someone (a) still learning and not yet ready to lead (Ex02-14a) or be used perjoratively to indicate (b) immature and non-adult behavior (Gn37-02b, Gn41-12b) or be used to indicate someone in the process of development and not yet with a defined personality (Gn25-27a). Synedochally it can refer to workers and apprentices (Gn14-24a)</i>

a

<p>Gn14-14d, Gn14-15c</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Nicknames</p> <p>The town of <i>Dan</i> was nicknamed <i>the guilty district</i> (similar to the modern idiom <i>the red district</i>)</p>	<p><i>Frequently, people and places are given two names in the Bible, one of which is their nickname something people call one because of an outstanding characteristic. The place of Dan was also called The Guilty District; this is similar to the modern idiom, the red district. It refers to a place known for sinful behavior.</i></p> <p>Abraham continued his conquests (initially started for liberating his nephew) until the <i>guilty districts</i>; most probably, he reasoned, that if he conquered them, his soldiers would get involved in unwanted activities there.</p> <p>Interestingly Rashi appears to be narrow and says that Abraham stopped at the guilt district because of the idolatry that Danites established there several hundred years later, the Michah idol described in detail in Judges 18. This appears narrow. To broaden it we use the technique of generalization which is a skillful technique useful to understanding Rashi. First: Idolatry and sex always go together. Most probably, when the Danites established their idol, they did so there because the place was known for <i>guilty</i> behavior and thus they had a sufficient marketing base. In other words, Rashi is not <i>exhausting</i> the explanation of the name of the place with the reference to Micah's idol but rather <i>illustrating</i> that the place was known in general for idolatry and guilty behavior as <i>illustrated</i> by what happened there with Micah's idol during the time of the Judges.</p>
---------------------------	----------	---	--

VERSES: Gn14-23a, Gn14-23b (Parallelism)

Gn14-23	Verse Beginning / Intro	Parallel oaths	Verse Conclusion
	<p>Abram said to the King of Sedom: I swear to Go (lit <i>I lift my hand to God, the Highest Almighty</i>)</p>	<p>-If (1) <i>from a string to a shoelace</i></p> <p>-If (1) <i>I will take anything of yours</i></p>	<p>(2) So you shouldn't say, "<i>I (am the one) who made Abram wealthy.</i>"</p>

NOTES: (1) Note the repeating *if* (bolded). A repeating keyword like *if* indicates a bullet structure and hence the column "Parallel" oaths have been reformatted as bullets to reflect this. A bulleted list is used to emphasize distinctness among the bulleted items (which without the bullets would look like repetition). The context of the verse is the return of booty after the war Abraham had just waged to save his nephew. Motivated by this context Rashi interprets the distinctness of the two bullets as follows:

- *String to shoelace* indicates booty from the war (things likely to be taken in a war)
- *Anything of yours* indicates *personal remuneration* from the King's royal assets.

In other words, Abram says he will take neither compensation nor booty items.

(2)The "Verse Conclusion" column is parallel to the "Parallel Oaths" column as shown in the Table. This type of parallelism where the two parallel parts indicate *assertion* and *justification* is very common. The *justification* given *So it shouldn't be said that Abram became rich from the King of Sedom* is consistent with the parallel oaths that Abraham took abstaining from taking from the King of Sedom any type of compensation or a percentage of the booty.

VERSE: Gn14-24a (Parallelism)

Gn14-24	Context-Previous Verse		
	<p>Upon the King of Sedom offering Abraham a</p>	<p>Exactly what the staff (Abraham's</p>	

	portion of the booty or compensation for his fighting the war, Abram states that <i>he will not take anything</i> and then continues <i>except</i>	servants who fought the war)	
		And the portion of the men who walked with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre	They will take their portion

NOTES: Notice that there are two groups who will take compensation: (a) The actual soldiers (Abraham's servants) who fought the war (b) the other soldiers and staff who did not go into battle but for example watched possessions of those fighting until they returned. Abraham established a principle, later perpetuated by King David (1Ki30-24), that the fighting soldiers and remaining staff divide *equally* in every battle (even though the fighting soldiers may have worked harder or taken more risks).

a

VERSE: Gn13-17a (**Paragraphs**)

- Gn12-06: The Canaanites were in the land at that time(2): God appeared to Abraham and said **your descendants(1) will inherit this land**
- Abraham is forced to leave Canaan because of the famine and travels to Egypt.(3)
- ...Abraham and Lot had many more possessions than the land had resources for; there arose disputes between Abraham's and Lot's sheppards even though the Canaanites were (2) at that time in the land so they separated
- *(Gn13-14) After Lot separated from Abraham (3) God told him: Look at the breadth and depth of this land because **it will(1) be given to you and your descendants**

NOTES: (1) Gn12-06 through Gn13-14 stand as one biblical paragraph; the paragraph structure is indicated by the repeating bolded phrase **the land will be given to you an your descendants**. In English, a paragraph structure is indicated by either white space prior and after the paragraph, or by indentation, or by both white space and indentation. Such formatting indicates that the group of sentences inbetween constitutes one paragraph with a central theme that is developed. In Biblical Hebrew, the paragraph is indicated by a repeated opening and closing phrase with sentences inbetween. The theme of this paragraph should be clear: Abraham's descendants *will* inherit the land. The reason why the land is not being given immediately is stated in another verse: (Gn15-16) *Four generations*

from now your descendants will have this land because the Emorite sins (justifying their banishment) will not be complete till that time. Note how the first set of sentences after the introductory phrase in the paragraph – the sentences that indicate that Abraham could not stay in the land that was promised to be eventually his because of a famine forcing him to leave it – is consistent with the nuance that acquisition of the land will happen in the future.

(2)(3) Also consistent with the *future* fulfillment of the promise is the phrase that *the Canaanites were then in the land* is also consistent with this and the explanation given in Gn15-16. The second set of sentences in the paragraph (after Abram’s descent to Egypt) states that there was a conflict between Lot’s Sheppards and Abram’s sheppards; but the text does not specify the cause of the conflict. Three explanations are offered.

#1) Rashi consistent with the theme of future inheritance (not now) suggests that sheppards allowed sheep to graze freely in Canaan even though the land was not yet theirs. In other words these sheppards reasoned that since this land will belong to Abraham eventually they have the right to graze in it now. Consistent with this explanation of Rashi, is the narrative marked “(3)”, that God only reiterated and provided more detail on the future inheritance, *after* Lot left. God did not tell Abraham details since Lot’s sheppards misinterpreted the prophecies as applying now.

#2) The Ramban cites Rashi and demurs: *The simple meaning of the text is that they had a dispute because (as explicitly stated), “they had many assets and the land’s resources were not enough for them.* It is easy to refute the Ramban. Generally, Rashi explanations can offer both interpretations based on immediate verse text as well as interpretations based on the surrounding text. Other commentators such as Ramban and Ibn Ezra were not aware of the grammar of surrounding text (In fact this grammar of surrounding text known as pragmatics is modern and Ramban and Ibn Ezra unlike Rashi based their knowledge of Grammar on the models at that time of the Arab grammarians.) So the Ramban is perfectly correct that *if you only read v5-6 the dispute was because of insufficient resources.* However, if you read v5-6 in the context of the entire paragraph which addresses future possession of the land, Rashi’s explanation is superior.

#3) Ibn Ezra interprets the word *then* in the phrases (indicated by “(2)” above) to mean immediately then According to the Ibn Ezra the Canaanites had just conquered the land as indicated by *then* which he interprets *immediately then*. However, the Ibn Ezra’s principle while correct for verbs (*then* does typically indicate *just then*) for nouns and noun phrases *then* can simply indicate emphasis Compare

- Gn24-41 (*then* after a verb), Then (meaning: then and not before),when my family does not want to give you a wife, you will be free from my oath
- 2S23-14 2S23-14, (*then*) at that time David was already dwelling in Metzudah or Job18-21 did you know the time (*then*) you were going to be born and have many years

Thus the current text, *The Canaanites where then in the land* (with *then* preceding a noun phrase, *in the land*) is simply emphasizing and echoing the statement in Gn15-16 that the land that God promised Abraham was already occupied and wouldn’t be free for another 400 years.
