

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

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MG=Modern Grammar with Applications to Rashid (www.Rashiyom.com/Rashibook2.htm)}

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PESHAT: THE SPONTANEOUS REACTION OF NATIVE SPEAKERS FAMILIAR WITH WORD NUANCES

WHAT IS NEW IN THIS ISSUE

- A fundamental belief of Lubavitch Chasidus is that *God seeks dwelling in this world* and this is in fact one of the few items the Rebbe recommended be said daily. This idea permeates many branches of Judaism; Heschel actually wrote a book *God in Search of Man*. One basis for this idea occurs in a beautiful controversy between Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban in this week's parshah. I show that Rashi really agreed with Ramban and Ibn Ezra. This very deep philosophical idea has its roots in the simple grammatical use of prepositional connectives.

RASHI ID: Ex41-42a

Ex41-42a

Biblical Text: *[they will offer two daily offerings a day and I will dwell amongst them and] then they will realize that I am the Lord, their God, who took them out of Egypt in order to be able to dwell among them.*

Rashi Text: In order to be able to dwell among them: (Rashi) For that purpose.

Discussion: To facilitate the discussion, we distinguish between pre-requisite and purpose. Take a simple example, going to a concert.

- The prerequisite for going (what you have to do *beforehand*) is buy a ticket

- The purpose of going, (what you accomplish *after* you enter) is hearing the concert piece.

In Hebrew you indicate *purpose* not, as in English, with a word or phrase, but by prefixing the word with the letter *lamed*. The letter *lamed* indicates the preposition *to* and is more generally used to indicate where you are going to in the future. Hence, it is the ideal indicator of purpose.

Rashi however *phrases* this with the Aramaic *al menath*. Now the Rashi-Aramaic phrase *al menath kayn* indicates prerequisite. Hence, Ramban erroneously thought Rashi interpreted the verse as a prerequisite rather than as purpose. Ramban demurs: *But the prefix lamed is never used that way*. Ramban gives some discussion and then cites the Ibn Ezra who explains explicitly that the *lamed* indicates *purpose and goal*. Ramban concludes by pointing out that this idea, *that God's purpose is to find dwelling among us* is a mystical secret.

And in fact, all the kabbalists, and later chasidus, for example Lubavitch chasidus, emphasize that God seeks dwelling among us. This idea occurs in diverse branches of Judaism: For example, Heschel wrote a book *God in*

Search of Man.

Just to be clear, I answer the Ramban's objection by pointing out that

- *al menath kayn* is always used by Rashi for *prerequisites*, while

- *al menath*, is frequently used by Rashi to indicate future goals

I close by explaining *why* God seeks man. Imagine the Egyptian world where people live with dead animals, where you work 24/7, where food is overabundant and people overeat. If you view that world you don't see God's presence. Now imagine the Jewish world, where we abstain from impurities like dead animals; where work during the week is interrupted with rest and tranquility, where we control what we eat, and where Temple rituals are adorned with the most magnificent and colorful of dresses. In such a world you *do see* God's presence. Thus, the statement, *God seeks dwelling among humans* means that without exemplary human behavior we cannot be aware of God's presence.

QUICKIES

VERSE ID	Text of Biblical Verse	Hebrew Word	Figure of Speech	Brief Explanation
Ex27-20d	...Command the Jewish People to take pure olive oil processed for light in order to continually light the Menorah	<i>ta-mid</i>	Synecdoche	Just as honey can refer to anything sweet, just as day (12-hour part) can refer to the 24-hour day, so too something done every day can be called continual even though it is not continuous over time. Rashi brings examples: The same Hebrew word, continual, is used to describe the priestly minchah (done morning and evening) and the show bread (laying on the table all the time)
Ex27-08c	With stone jewelers artisanry, engrave the two stones with [lit. on] the names of the tribes	<i>al</i>	Pronouns	The Hebrew connective pronouns such as in, to, like, from, on etc. all interchange in meaning. In this verse Rashi explains that the Hebrew word <i>al</i> which normally means on, means here with
Ex28-17a	Engrave (lit. fill) it [the stones] with stone engravings (lit. fillings), 4 rows...	<i>mi-lu-ath a-ven</i>	Meronymy	Just as we call the King the Crown, the elderly Greybeards, and soldiers the sword, so too we call engraved stones filled stones - holes are drilled in the stone which are then filled with various gems (See an identical Rashi Ex25-07b). In these examples we name something by a part of it.

<p>Ex28-28a</p>	<p><i>Tightly fit the Choshen ornament from its rings to the Ephod garment rings with a blue-azure thread</i></p>	<p>ve-yir-ke-su</p>	<p>Hypernymy</p>	<p><i>Rashi simply translates the Hebrew root Resh-Caph-Samech as unite. However, my position is that Rashi will use parent categories (hypernyms) so as to address a wider audience and communicate further detail by examples. In this case the parent category (hypernym) is unite while the hyponym (an instance of the general category) are types of uniting including tight unites. Rashi cites two examples: "Save me from tightly unified gangs" (Ps 31:21) and "The tightly bound mountains will be made into a [smooth] valley [Isa. 40:4] Rashi explains that the mountains are so close that to descend one and go to the next requires an almost vertical descent; yet these tightly knit mountains will be smoothed out in the time of redemption</i></p>
<p>Ex28-32a,b</p>	<p><i>The neck of the skirt (lit. the mouth of the head) shall be double layered (lit. inside it)</i></p>	<p>piv</p>	<p>Synecdoche - Form</p>	<p><i>In all languages we speak about the arms of a suit, the neck of a sweater, the legs of the pants: We are designating spatial forms using good examples [synecdoche] of them. In Hebrew the neck is called the mouth of the head because it is on top [head] and because it is open (like a mouth). Double layering of the neck (to strengthen it and prevent tears) is called inside since the 2nd layer is typically inside.</i></p>
<p>Ex28-33a,b,c:34a</p>	<p><i>Make on its hem pomegranates of azure, royal crimson wool, worm dyed wool on the hem surrounding it with golden hammer-bells [lit. hammer] in-between them (lit. inside) surrounding them. A hammer-bell, pomegranate, and hammer bell, a hammer-bell, pomegranate, and hammer bell on the hem surrounding it.</i></p>	<p>ri-mo-nay</p>	<p>Synecdoche - Form</p>	<p><i>Just as in English, orange can refer to the fruit as well as the color, just as male and female can refer to electrical inserts and electric receptors, so too pomegranate in this verse does not literally mean a pomegranate but rather something that looks in form like a pomegranate. Rashi explains they were woven circular and hollow like an egg. Here spatial form (pomegranate-like) is indicated by a good example of it (synecdoche), In a similar manner hammer looks like the inside hammer parts of bells which knock the container and produce the ring. Also in a similar manner, inside is a good example of in-between: The hammer-bells were between each pair of pomegranates but not inside them. Rashi knows this because the very next verse states explicitly A hammer bell, pomegranate, and hammer bell...on the skirt hem surrounding it.</i></p>