

# The Rashi Database Project

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**MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY:** DT = Doctoral Thesis ([www.Rashiyomi.com/Rashibook.htm](http://www.Rashiyomi.com/Rashibook.htm),

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

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

**RASHI ID: Gn27-42b, Gn37-18a, Ex08-05a, Ex32-03a (Conjugations(Binyanim),  
 Gn26-05a, Gn26-05b, Gn26-05c, Gn26-05d, Gn25-06e, Lv18-04b, Lv19-19a, Nu19-02a, Nu09-03a, Lv25-46b (Synonyms)**

## PESHAT: THE SPONTANEOUS REACTION TO SKILLFUL ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

### WHAT IS NEW IN THIS ISSUE:

- Five synonyms for commandments (statutes, principles, ordinances...)
- The hitpael should be translated as steaming oneself up to do something

**VERSES: Gn26-05a, Gn26-05b, Gn26-05c, Gn26-05d, Gn26-05e,**

### TABLE: SYNONYMS FOR *COMMANDMENTS*

There is a famous Talmudic dictum, “The Patriarchs observed all Torah commandments.” This has led to speculation on what this comment means: After all, Jacob the Patriarch married two sisters which is a violation of the biblical prohibition of marrying two sisters. Ramban gives three possible interpretations:

- #1) Abraham obeyed prophetic orders and encouraged others to do so
- #2) Abraham obeyed all Noachide commandments (which are the part of the Torah that existed at his time)
- #3) Abraham knew the Torah prohibitions through prophecy and observed them.

Based on the Rashi below I suggest a 4<sup>th</sup> approach:

- #4) Abraham observed the *categories* of commandments including the need to create rabbinic fences to prevent accidental violation, and including reformulation of the commandments into principle-driven ideas.

Rashi ID	Synonym for Commandment	Meaning	Rashi Examples	My further examples / comments
Gn26-05a	My Voice (Qol)	<i>Voice of God</i> = Prophecy	<i>When I tested Abraham (with asking him to offer his son)</i>	
Gn26-05b, Lv18-30a*	Guardings (mishmereth)	Biblical word for Rabbinic ordinances preventing accidental violation of laws	It is rabbinically prohibited to wash a table with a wet rag on Shabbos because you might end up wringing the water out of it which is biblically prohibited	
Gn26-05c	Commandments (Mitzvoth)	“Rational commandments: that is, commandments which if not commanded by God we would enact anyway such as the prohibition against murder and theft”	Prohibition against murder and theft	
Gn26-05d Lv18-04b, Lv19-19a, Nu19-02a Nu09-03a,	Statutes (ChuQiM)	Rashi gives 3 characterizations #1) Laws without apparent reasons #2) Laws that those outside Judaism tease us on, “This is a requirement of your religion? What do you think would happen if you don’t do them #3) “Decrees of the King, God” (I commanded these; you shouldn’t speculate on them)	Prohibition of eating ham; Prohibition of wearing garments made of wool and linen (Sha’atnez)	Note: An American law like “Thanksgiving holiday” is not really a law without reason; rather it is a symbolic law done to reinforce values. The prohibition of eating ham, symbolically affirms, for example, that I should not behave like a pig. Thus while having a reason the reason is personal rather than inter-social.

Gn26-05e	Oral laws (Toroth)	I think Torah or Toroth is best translated as <i>principles</i> coming from the root <i>hey-resh-hey</i> meaning <i>pregnant</i> and corresponds to the English idioms, <i>seed of an idea</i> . A good example of <i>principles</i> are the unkosher birds: The bible only lists them while the Rabbis gave underlying characteristics unifying them. Similarly throughout the Talmud, the oral law, Biblical laws are brought down to principles: e.g. The Talmud explains the biblical category of <i>fire</i> damage as <i>any damage that travels and damages</i> so that it would include a heavy ball rolling and causing damage.	. A good example of <i>principles</i> are the unkosher birds: The bible only lists them while the Rabbis gave underlying characteristics unifying them. Similarly throughout the Talmud, the oral law, Biblical laws are brought down to principles: e.g. The Talmud explains the biblical category of <i>fire</i> damage as <i>any damage that travels and damages</i> so that it would include a heavy ball rolling and causing damage.
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**VERSES:** Gn27-42b, Gn37-18a, Gn37-18b, Ex08-05a, Ex32-03a, Ex32-03b, Lv26-46a,

**TABLE:** Hitpa'el Conjugation indicates an active voice *under some powerful influence*

**(NOTE: This material is based on my doctoral thesis and my article which appeared in the Jewish Bible Quarterly (and has a lot more details))**

Biblical Chapter	Translation of verse with meaning of <i>hitpa'el</i> in italics	What is the activity	Under what influence is the activity operating
Gn27-42b	Rivkah [Speaking to Jacob her son after Jacob had stolen the blessings from his father Isaac by disguising himself as Esau] spoke to Jacob her son: Look I found out, Esau your brother is steaming himself up in order to kill you.	Plotting to kill you	Jealousy and outrage of Jacob stealing the blessings
Gn37-18a, Gn37-18b	They (Joseph's brothers) saw Joseph far away and <i>began steaming themselves up</i> to plot to kill him	Plotting to kill Joseph	Hatred of Joseph
Ex08-05a	Moses said to Pharoh, "Dare me! (Steam yourself up to try and outsmart me) By suggesting the time when the frogs will depart"	Testing whether the time Pharoh requests for frog removal will be the time they disappear	An attempt to outsmart Moses
Ex32-03a	The nation acting under herd pressure and influence unloaded all ear jewelry	Gathering jewelry for making an idol	Herd hysteria (whole nation wanted an idolatrous holiday)
Lv26-42b	(Paragraph discusses slaves and bondmaids of Jewish owners) Preserve them under the specific influence that these will be inherited and bequeathed to your children as inheritance	Preservation of assets	Specific awareness that these assets will be inherited by their children