

ParShaT *VaYaQheL PeQuDaY* - One Pager Series

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Rashi #1, #2, #3: Biblical Text: Ex39-03 They skied(1) the gold sheets and cut [to] threads to make it(2)

- * In the midst(3) of the Azure
- * In the midst(3) of the Royal Purple
- * In the midst(3) of the Scarlet and
- * In the midst (3) of the Linen

[NOTES: *The Rashi comments are linked to the biblical text with the parenthetical numbers as shown above. The full Rashi text is summarized after explaining them.*

Although in our Chumashim there is one Rashi text, there are 3 comments in this one Rashi text.. This is consistent with the organs of the Rashi anatomy which inquire on each Rashi i) how many comments there are and ii) what Rashi is really commenting on]

Rashi Text: #1: This use of *to sky* is similar to the usage in Psalms 136,6, "[God] Who skies the land on water."

Rashiyomi Explanation: Rashi here is using the Grammar pillar in conjunction with the Figure of Speech, *synecdoche*. The technical grammatical term, is *denominative*. This is not usually taught in schools; but it is a rule of grammar not different than the verb conjugations which we are taught. *Denominative* refers to the creation of a verb (activity) from a noun (object). Gottfurcht (2008) in her doctoral thesis gives 8 examples of classes of denominative in English. E.g.: *to hospitalize* which names a verb by location, *to dust* which names a verb that removes the noun (in this case the dust), *to hammer* which names a verb by the typical activity of the instrument (in this case hammer), *to flower* which names a verb that creates the noun. In this case using the *synecdoche* Figure of Speech, a good example of a (perfectly flattened object) is the sky; *to sky* would then be the denominative *to flatten*. Rashi gives a textual parallel in Psalm 136:6, *[God] who skies the land on water*

Full Rashi Text: #2: In this verse they teach how the threads were loomed

Rashiyomi Explanation: The Hebrew verb **ayin-sin-hey** is normally translated as *to make*. However, this same verb can have a more technical meaning of *fixing* as in fixing her nails (**Dt21-12**) or bathing his legs (**2S19-25**) and would in fact correspond to the English idiom *fix myself up*. In the verse we are studying Rashi interprets *to make* as fixing which in this case means to loom.

Full Rashi Text: #3: These threads are 28-ply. Each item, azure, royal-purple, scarlet, and linen, is doubled from six threads to which is added a golden thread.

Rashiyomi Explanation: Note the bulleted structure in the citation above. In my article Biblical Formatting (Jewish Bible Quarterly, 35#1 (2007) 17--27, accessible online) I show that when a biblical author wished to indicate bullets they would use an introductory repeating phrase (In modern notation we use actual bullets, hollow or filled in circles). In the verse above we see that the phrase *in the midst of* is repeated with each color, Azure, Royal Purple, Scarlet, Linen. An alternate style would be for the biblical verse to say *to make in the midst of the azure, royal purple, scarlet, and linen*.

But what does the bulleted structure (whether as indicated in English or in Hebrew) accomplish? Bullets, whether in English or Hebrew indicate that the set of items bulleted forms a complete set with individual emphasis on *each* item. Thus the text states that the gold thread was separately combined with each thread, gold and azure, gold, and royal purple, etc.

Furthermore, from the phrase *in the midst* instead of just *in* there is an emphasis that the gold threads were placed in the *midst* implying that the gold thread was added to each thread after being doubled.

The only thing left to explain in the Rashi is his assertion that there were 6 threads (which is not in this text). My own personal opinion is that the sixness is derived from the linen whose Hebrew name is *six*. This is similar to the Rashi comment on the copper snake figure that Moses made; for we find no command that it should be of copper, just that he should make a snake; Rashi asserts that Moses chose the color copper because the word for copper and snake is the same in Hebrew as in the English *copperhead* (Nu21-09).