

Rashi #1: Biblical Text: Lv15-31 [Background: The preceding biblical paragraphs have been discussing the various ritual impurities arising from (involuntary) bodily secretions. The paragraph now concludes] Separate [Vehizartem] the Jews from their impurity so that they don't die when impure by conferring ritual impurity on the Temple...

Rashi Text: Separate [Hebrew: *Vehizartem*] A language of separation, removal from [Rashi then gives two other comparable verses which need not concern us here]

Rashiyomi: This Rashi appears straightforward. After all, one of the four major exegetical pillars is dictionary meaning. There is a rare biblical Hebrew word in the verse; Rashi explains it is *a language of separation and removal* and the English translations also translate it as *separate*. So, the Rashi seems to be clear.

But there is a danger in viewing this Rashi as *clear*; there is a danger of losing the nuances, the bounce, and richness of the word. To explain this caution, we first recall the principle of *hypernymy* which refers to the parent-child relationship that exists among groups of words (See the *wordnet* website for a plethora of examples). A simple *hypernym-hyponym* example is the hypernym of *color* whose hyponyms *red, blue, yellow, green, orange* are well known. Consider now the following hypothetical example.

Example: A book you are reading speaks about the *lavender dress* that a woman is wearing.

You may not know what *lavender* means. So, you peak in the Rashi-like commentary on the book.

Rashi-like commentary: *Lavender* is a *language of color*.

Possible inference #1: You (incorrectly) assume that Rashi requires *lavender dress* to be translated as *colored dress* or *colorful dress*.

Possible inference #2: You assume that *lavender* is a hyponym (child) of the hypernym (parent category) *color*. However, you don't know which color it refers to. Obviously knowing the exact color of the dress may link to other items in the story and enrich your understanding of it.

We can now abstract this example

*Rashi says *vehizartem* is the *language of separation*

*We do not interpret this to mean that *vehizartem* means separation

*Rather we interpret this to mean that *vehizartem* is a hyponym (child) of the parent category (hypernym) of separation.

*Which hyponym? I would coin a term, a denominative (a verb coming from a noun), *Neighborhood the Jews from ritual impurity*. Here the word *neighborhood* says more than separate or remove; it means that the Jews must form their own community, their own neighborhoods, which separates them from the riff-rafs not complying with the laws of ritual impurity.

Rashi #2: Biblical Text: Lv14-41 *The house should be scraped inside around [the leprous affliction]*

Rashi Text: *scraped* is the language (child of the parent category) of cutting or edges

Rashiyomi: Notice the richer more nuanced explanation in *scraping* vs. *cutting*. *Scraping* means *trim edges*.