

## ParShaT **TaZReAh** One Pager Series

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**[Background:** We have been bringing controversies between Rashi and either academic scholars or other Jewish commentaries. Today we examine a Rashi-Ibn Ezra. Also this beautiful posting brings back memories – I first published it 23 years ago 4/12/1999]

**Rashi #1a Biblical Text: Lv13-49a** [Discussing garment leprosy] The leprosy is *redred* or *greengreen* [Note: This is the best English translation as the letters are doubled in Hebrew Both Rashi and Ibn Ezra explain why the letters are doubled.]

**Rashi:** *redred* – The reddest of reds, pure red, [a cherry or strawberry red.]

**Ibn Ezra:** *redred* – a) *A weakish red* [like maroon or pink] b) Like (Song 1:6) Don't fear me that I am *blackblack* [Tanned a weak black] tarnished by the sun c) And there are those who say the opposite [that it means intensely weak]

**A Second Example:** (Ps45-03) *You are prettier prettier from most people."*

**Ibn Ezra is Asking Questions:** Clearly the doubling here means *the prettiest* an *intense prettiness* not a *weak prettiness*. That is exactly what Ibn Ezra says thus partially contradicting himself to Lv13-49 (He suggests that *intensity* vs. *weakness* depends on which letters are doubled but that doesn't hold in all examples). I therefore suggest that on Lv13-49a Ibn Ezra was not disagreeing with Rashis but asking clarifications on two verses where the doubling seems to mean *weaker* not *stronger*. We will answer these questions below.

**Five More Examples of Clearly Intense:** #1) Song 5-11: The root *TLL* means lump or hump. In Songs5-11 the male lover is described as having *lump\_lump* (*braided*) *locks* [of hair] that are jet black. #2) Isa54-12 I will make your sun *spark\_spark* (like the interest *sparkling*) #3) Gn50-21 I will *all-all* [subsidize/support you; give you everything (all) you need], #4) Ex16-23 Take a *cold\_cold* bottle [a thermos which preserves coldness for a long time[ and store in it the manna #5) 2S6-14 David was *dig\_diging* [*dancing* like the motions of a digger] with all strength before God.

**What About the Exceptions:** There are two possible exceptions. One, already mentioned by Ibn Ezra is Songs 1-6 *Don't be afraid of me because I am tan because the sun tarnished me.* The Ibn Ezra i) translated the Hebrew root Shin-Cheth-Resh, *shachor*, as black; ii) he then translated *black-black* as *tan* and came to the conclusion that iii) *tan* is a weakened black so that the theory that doubling always means intensity does not work

And the response? The defense of Rashi? We i) translate Shin-Cheth-Resh as *dawn*; we then iii) translate *dawn-dawn* as *intense dawn, the reddish hue* that fills the sky at the end of dawn right before sunrise, ii) so the verse says *Don't be afraid of me that I am sunburned (dawn-dawned) because the sun tarnished me.*

**The Second Exception:** (Ps 38-11) *My heart is sold\_out\_sold\_out, my strength leaves me.* It appears in this case that the heart is not really sold out! That is an exaggeration. But it metaphorically has used up its most of its reserves.

And the response? The root Samech-Cheth-Resh not only refers to merchants but also refers to the activity of merchants, auctions, where things are negotiated and sold. We would translate *My heart is auctioned\_auctioned* referring to a fluttering fibrillating heart that goes back and forth like an auction without having any forceful thrust. The Psalmist then continues [*hence*] *I have lost my strength.*

**Summary:** This posting has explored some bumpy terrain. Not all Rashi's are about grammar. Some are about nuance, tone, and a flowing translation. In the majority of case we have seen that doubling of words indicates intensity. The Ibn Ezra acknowledged this. He didn't disagree with Rashi; he only questioned how to interpret some verses that looked exceptional. We have responded to the Ibn Ezra and shown the intricacies, beauties, and innuendoes of good translation.

**Acknowledgement:** This analysis was first published at the dawn of the Rashi website on August 12, 1999, 23 years ago. You can read the original posting at [www.Rashiyomi.com/h1n23.htm](http://www.Rashiyomi.com/h1n23.htm) I thank God (and my readers) for the privilege of teaching new perspectives on Rashis for the past 23 years and hope I have made an impact. We pray the next 23 years be even better than the previous 23 years.