

ParShaT *BeHa'aLoTheChaH* 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 Ramban-Rashi controversy]

Rashi #1,#2 Biblical Text: Nu08-04g,h *This is the build of the Candelabra: It is solid even to its base and flowers; like the vision that God prophesied to Moses, thus did he make the Candelabra.*

Rashi #1: Like the vision: This refers to the verse Ex26-40, [God speaking to Moses] "You should see and do their construction which you were shown on the mountain."

Rashi #2: Thus did he make: This refers to whomever actually made it [whose name we don't know] And the Midrash Aggadah explains this as referring to God: That God ordered the metal be thrown into the fire and the Candelabra was made by itself.

Ramban: Thus did he make: This refers to Moses who worked at understanding the requirements and made the Candelabra. This interpretation is consistent with the Sifrey: "This verse praises Moses that he did exactly as God commanded him." But Rashi explained "thus did he make" to refer to "whomever made it [whose name we don't know]." And the Midrash Aggadah explains this as referring to God: That God ordered the metal be thrown into the fire and the Candelabra was made by itself."

First Appearances: The Ramban certainly seems correct. A simple reading of the italicized biblical text above sees "Moses doing the construction as he was commanded." Additionally it seems far-fetched to

say that "thus did he make the candelabra" refers to God making it by a miracle.

Response of Rashi: Quite simply, Moses did not make the Candelabra and hence the meaning of the "thus did he make" could not refer to him. In fact, Ex36-01:04 makes it clear that there was a whole team of craftspeople creating the desert Temple. Additionally, on Ex37-01, "And Bezalel made the ark..." Rashi clarifies, "He did not himself make the ark as it was made by a team. But because he was the project leader and devoted himself to the project he was given credit."

It follows that Rashi's interpretation of "thus did he make the Candelabra", as "whoever it was who made it" is correct. It also follows that the Sifrey cited by the Ramban, "This is to praise Moses who did exactly as God commanded him," correctly refers to Moses in his capacity as project manager for constructing the Temple: He is praised for seeing that the Temple was made by the craftspeople exactly as God commanded.

The Midrash Aggadah: It appears that the Midrash Aggadah that "thus did God make the Candelabra (which came itself out of the fire)" is (incorrectly) derived from the verse "thus did he make the Candelabra" with the pronoun he being interpreted to refer to God. If this was the case, it would be far-fetched and taken out of context.

The Correct Derivation: Rashi Nu08-04g, gives the correct interpretation. It is based on a parallel comparison of similar verses as shown in this Table.

Verse	1st part	2nd part
Nu08-04	As the vision	that God showed Moses [on the mountain]
Ex26-40	In their <i>construction</i>	that you were shown [by God] on the mountain

The comparison of these verses clearly emphasized that Moses was shown their *construction*. This simply means that God presented Moses with a prophetic vision in which Moses saw a block of metal going into the furnace fire and then coming out malleable from which the Candelabra, its base, its flowers, and all parts of it were made.

In other words, God made the Candelabra come from itself in a prophetic vision which he showed to Moses. This is not derived from twisting of grammar, but rather it is derived from a comparison of verses with one verse explicitly saying that Moses was shown the construction.