

# The RashiYomi NewsLetter

The 10 RashiYomi Rules, Vol 31#1, Mar. 14th, 2019  
*Their Presence in this Week's Parshah, TzaV*

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*We need questions! Please **send questions on Rashi to [RashiYomi@GMail.Com](mailto:RashiYomi@GMail.Com)** Today I present an advanced use of the Rashi Reference method. I bet you think reference is easy and can be done by a computer lookup. Ha! Read today's digest and you will see the ethereal beauty of a properly executed Reference!*

Biblical Text: Lv07-09:10

Any *minchah* offering that is

- *Oven cooked*
- *Pot made, or*
- *On a frying pan*

Will belong to the priest offering it

Any *minchah* that is

- *Oil mixed, or*
- *Dry*

Will belong to all priests each person equally

**Lv02-01:07**

If a soul wishes to offer Minchah

- A) Pure wheat will it be, with oil poured on it and frankincense on it

When you offer oven-baked *minchah*

- B) Matzoh loafs mixed with oil
- C) Matzoh wafers with oil spread
- D) A minchah that is on a frying pan, pure wheat mixed with oil, made into Matzohs
- E) If a pot-Minchah is offered, pure wheat (immersed in oil)

**Lv05-11** When a person sins by withholding evidence...and if he is very poor

The offering for the sin will be a minchah, pure wheat without oil or frankincense because it is a sin offering

yellow text represents text from a previous parshah. The yellow text discusses or presents the types of Minchah offerings that can be offered.

## Introduction to Minchah:

Let us do this slowly since the text is complicated. As can be seen in the yellow text if a person wishes to offer a voluntary Minchah they have 5 types of Minchahs to offer. They differ in preparation and in how oil is used in the preparation. The Minchahs can be non-cooked (Type A) or oven baked (Type B, C) or frying-pan made (D) or in a pot (E). As can be seen some are made *mixed with oil*, some have *oil spread on them*, and some are made *immersed in oil*. In any event, **Lv02** is the chapter discussing the types of voluntary offerings

There are other Minchah offerings. For example, **Lv05-11** on bottom mentions an obligatory sin offering which is a minchah if the person is very poor. Note that this offering has no oil.

## Modern Theory of Adjectives

Most people are unaware of the modern rich theory of adjectives. It was developed in part by

In the figure, the blue text represents the text and Rashi from this week's Parshah while the

philosophers and in part by the computer scientists who attempt to program certain language tasks.

The simplest adjective is the intersective adjective. Consider a *white dress*. *White* in the phrase *white dress* is an adjective, it modifies the noun *dress* and tells what type of *dress* it is. How do we understand the adjective? We understand it as an intersection of two sets: Something is a *white dress* if that thing belongs to the set of *dresses* and also belongs to the set of *white things*. In other words, an item is a *white dress* if it is *both* white and a dress.

You will probably ask, “Why all the fuss?” Isn’t that obvious? How else could it be?

Well there are many adjectives that are not intersective. For example, a *big mouse* is not *big*. A *small plane* is not *small*. A *white wine* is not white.

How then do we understand *white wine*? We understand it contrastively: If the color of the wine is lighter and more transparent than other wines, we say it is *white* even though it is not *white*. Similarly, a *big mouse* is *big* relative to other mice but it itself is not big. An adjective whose meaning is relative to a context is called *subsective*.

That is all we need for the Rashi. But if you want to know more about the theory of adjectives there are privative adjectives: For example, a *toy gun* is not a *gun*!! It is a very beautiful theory but we have enough for our Rashi.

### **The Blue Text – Our verse – The Problem**

Rashi knew all about adjectives (Rashi knew all!). Let us go back to the blue text our verse. The verses speak about five types of minchah: *oven baked, fried, pot-made, voluntary, and dry*.

Rashi here will use the **Reference Method**. Rashi wishes to explain each *minchah* mentioned in the blue text as referring to some

known minchah in the yellow text. The problem is, there is no *dry* minchah mentioned in the yellow text. Furthermore, there are five types of voluntary minchahs. How can Rashi make a reference when it is not there?

### **Rashi – The Solution**

It is important in solving this problem of Rashi to realize that God was not a legalist like say the Rambam. The Rambam in his great legal code developed a precise method of cross reference. For example, in the laws of Shabbath and divorce various synonyms have precise meaning. The words *liable, exempt, permissible* can refer in Shabbath laws, to activities which are biblically prohibited (*liable*), activities which are *permissible* to do, and activities which are *exempt* from a biblical death penalty but are prohibited (Say rabbinically). See Rambam Shabbath 1:1-3 for further details. The Rambam consistently uses these phrases throughout all the laws of Shabbath!

The Torah is not only a legal code. Very often ambiguity is used for exhortative and moralistic reasons.

Let us now return to the blue text. What could *dry minchah* refer to. Looking over our list we see it could refer to the sin-offering minchah which has no oil. So, no oil is called dry.

Is this homily and *derash* or is it the simple meaning of the text, the *peshat*? We claim it is the simple meaning of the text, the *peshat*. It is not *derash*. Why? Because the fact that a clear wine is called a *white wine* is the simple meaning of the phrase. Similarly, calling a minchah *dry* is using the adjective *dry* subsectively! A no-oil Minchah relative to other Minchahs is *dry*.

### **Why?**

Even if I have convinced you, you no doubt want to scream that it is confusing. Why couldn’t God simply say the sin-offering minchah? Why did God introduce another term?

Good question. The good answer is that God was not playing Rambam; God is not just a legalist. He is exhortative and moral. There is a non-legal message here to sinners: *If your life lacks plumpness and richness (symbolized by oil), if your life is dry, it is because you sin. Happiness is not determined by your possessions but also by your attitude and relation to people.*

Should such a statement be found in the Bible? Well, if the Bible is a legal code it should not. If the Bible however is a moral-legal code an exhortative-legal document, then it should.

The reason the reader finds this Rashi so strange is not because it is homiletic, but rather because they are reading the Bible through the lens of the Rambam which is incorrect.

### More in Rashi

Notice how the blue text lists *oven-baked, pot-made, or on a frying pan, or voluntary.*

But the yellow text says that voluntary minchahs come in five flavors: uncooked pure wheat, oven baked (two), fried, and pot-made. So quite simply Rashi says that the *voluntary* in the blue text refers to all the voluntary offerings including those not yet mentioned such as uncooked pure wheat minchah.

### The Contradiction Method

So far so good. We have explained the biblical text. But did you notice that the voluntary minchahs were interrupted with a statement that when a priest offers a minchah he gets the leftovers of that minchah. Then in the very next verse it says that all priests get it equally.

This is the famous **Contradiction Method**. The Sifrah has a cute way of describing this

- So, you think the offering priest has it? Not so; it says *to all priests it shall be*
- So, you think all priests can eat it? Not so; it says *the offering priest has it.*

Rashi resolves the **Contradiction Method** by recalling the historical fact that individual

priests did not operate in the Temple (except the high priest). There were too many offerings. So, the Priesthood functioned as Priest Teams. There were 24 Priest Teams. Each of them worked on a rotational schedule of 2 weeks. On pilgrimage holidays when all Jews came to offer, all priests worked.

So now we understand Rashi: Rashi looks at the contradictory verse phrases: *to the offering priest – to all priests*, and simply says *to the offering priest team: The offering priest and his entire team could eat the leftovers of any minchah*. Such an interpretation fulfills both *the offering priest eats* as well as *all priests eat it equally*.

*Praise Be Him Who Chose Them & Their Learning*

## APPENDIX

### THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES

#### *A Lightning Summary with Examples*

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**Rule I-REFERENCE: EXAMPLE:** Dt26-05d *We went down to Egypt with a few people* explained by Gn46-27: with 70 people

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**Rule II-MEANING / Lexicography / Dictionary:**  
**EXAMPLE (Connectives)** KI means IF,PERHAPS,RATHER,BECAUSE,WHEN,THAT  
 (Rashi on Gn18-15a Gn24-33a ) **EXAMPLE (Nuances):**

YDA means FAMILIAR, not KNOW (e.g. Dt34-10a) egg Gn04-01 Adam was FAMILIAR with his wife  
**EXAMPLE (Idioms)** ON THE FACE OF means DURING THE LIFETIME (Rashi on Nu03-04a Gn11-28a Ex20-03c Dt05-07a) **EXAMPLE (Synonyms)** *Marchese* means pot; *Machinate* means frying pan (Lv02-05a, 07a) **EXAMPLE (Homonyms)** SHAMAH can mean listen, hear, understand: (Gn42-23a) *They didn't appreciate that Joseph understood them* (Note: They knew he was listening) **EXAMPLE (Metonymy)** (Lv02-11a) *Don't offer ...any honey as sacrifices* RASHI: *honey* includes any sweet fruit juice

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**Rule III-GRAMMAR: EXAMPLE:** BA-ah means COMING not CAME(Gn46-26a)

**EXAMPLE:** A grammatical conjugation in the Hitpa'el if 1st root letter is Tzade (Gn44-16a)

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**Rule IV-PARALLELISM: EXAMPLE:** (Ex20-04) Don't **POSSESS** the gods of others Don't **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSION** & **MAKING** of idols are prohibited

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**Rule V-CONTRADICTION: EXAMPLE:** (Nu04-03, Nu08-24a) Levites start Temple work at 25; Levites start temple work at 30. RASHI: They apprentice at 25 but start actual service at 30.

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**Rule VI-STYLE: RABBI ISHMAEL RULES: EXAMPLE:** (Simple verses should be generalized): (Rashi Pesachim 6) (Dt25-04a) *Don't MUZZLE an OX while THRESHING* RASHI: Don't STOP any WORKING ANIMAL from eating

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**Rule VII-FORMATTING: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition):** Ex12-09c) COOK it in water (So COOKED-COOKED is understood the same way bold is understood by modern reader) RASHI: Preferred to COOK it in water; But COOK it at all costs(Even if you don't have water) **EXAMPLE: (BULLETS indicated by Repeating keywords)** (Ex03-11a) Who am I - **THAT** I should go to Pharaoh - **THAT** I should take the Jews out of Egypt RASHI: Repeated word **THAT** creates BULLET effect - Pharaoh was a difficult king (Bullet one) - Jews were not yet ready for freedom (Bullet two) **EXAMPLE (Climax assumed in any Biblical list):** (Dt19-11a) *If a man HATES, SPIES, CONFRONTS & KILLS.* RASHI: Bible identifies 4 stages to murder (indicated by capped words)

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**Rule VIII-DATABASE: EXAMPLE:** *God spoke to Moses to say over* introduces about 7 dozen biblical commandments; *God spoke to Aaron to say over* only introduces 2 commandments. RASHI: (Lv10-03b) Aaron was silent when his sons died because they served in the Temple drunk; hence he merited that the commandment prohibiting priests to work in the Temple drunk, was given to him

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**Rule IX-NON VERSE: EXAMPLE:** (Use of Algebra)(Ex38-26b) *Temple donations of silver were 100 Kikar and 1775 Shekel from 630,550 half-shekels* RASHI: So one Kikar of silver = 3000 Shekel.

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**Rule X: SYMBOLISM: EXAMPLE:** (Use of puns) Moses made a copper snake for people to look up to when bitten by snakes (so they should pray and recover) RASHI: (Nu21-09a) The Hebrew root for copper and snake are identical (Cf. The English *copperhead*) Moses made the metal snake copper colored to symbolize the snake