## ParShaT SheMiNi- One Pager Series

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## Rashi #1: Biblical Text: Lv10-01:08

- Aaron's two sons (Nadav and Avihu) took their staffs, flamed them, and placed incense on them
- They offered something <u>not commanded to them</u>
- A fire went out from God and consumed them
- ...Aaron was silent
  - ....
- God spoke to Aaron [Not to Moses] to say over:
- Do not <u>drink strong and weak wine</u>, neither your nor your sons with you, when you come [to serve] in the Temple In other that you do not die

**Rashi #1:** <u>Opinion #1A:</u> They died because they decided a point of law that was <u>not commanded to them</u> (in other words they did not ask Moses) For whomever decides a point of law when his teacher is alive and could be asked is worthy of death <u>Option #1B:</u> They died because they served in the Temple while drunk.

**Rashiyomi:** We have explained in many similar situations that we do not have two *differing* opinions here, but rather two *complementary* opinions. There is no controversy. Rather there are two textual indicators of the reason Aaron's sons died. Each of these uses the Grammar exegetical pillar which deals with consecutive sentences in a paragraph.

- Opinion #1A looks at the *juxtaposition* not commanded...a fire went out and consumed them
- Opinion #1B looks at the juxtaposition *they died by fire from God....Don't drink strong or weak wine when doing Temple service.*

We can combine these opinions: *Because* they were drunk, they decided that they do not need to consult Moses in making a legal decision. We can go ever further since there are other opinions (mentioned in Midrashim) about their behavior (What possessed them that they acted that way). For example, one opinion cites yet another verse on the death of Aaron's sons.

Nu03-04 Nadav and Avihu died when offering a strange fire before God and they had no children

We thus have three opinions

- They decided the law themselves without consulting Moses
- They were drunk.

If you really want to understand *peshat*, we can remember the maxim of the great Chess pedagogist who said (about chess)

Your mind on the central theme, your eyes on the many ramifications, that is the deepest meaning of peshat.

It is simply wrong to say there are 3 opinions and the scholars disagree. And why is it wrong? Because you obtain a shallower reading of the text and miss its richness.

The proper way is to see the clear juxtaposition of paragraphs

## offered something they shouldn't .... don't serve drunk

This is the true *peshat*, the true *spontaneous* and *instant reaction* to hearing these verses. But telling us they were drunk and therefore they offered improperly is not the end of the story but the beginning, not of a story, but of a complex psychological drama. Why? It is that simple! Why did they act this way or more specifically why did they get drunk? The opinions mentioned reflect the ramifications of the central theme: 1) (Sifray) Aaron's sons said, "Moses and Aaron are dying; we will soon lead; let us make our own decisions;" 2) we are sons of the high priest; no woman is good enough for us (such arrogance leads to depression which leads to drinking). Thus, we indeed see, that true peshat involves *integrating* the plurality of opinions with the *peshat*.