

ParShaT *TeTzaVeH* - One Pager Series

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Rashi #1: Biblical Text: Ex29-42:46 [Background: The Bible speaks about the Daily Temple offering]

..A continual(1) offering in all generations, at the door of the Temple, facing God,

that I will designate for you there (2)

to speak to you there

And I will be designated there (3) for the Jewish people

And It [the Temple](4) will be sanctified with my Honor (5)

And They will know that I am the Lord thy God who took you

FROM Egypt TO dwell (6) in your midst I am God

Rashi Text: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6: Rashiyomi Explanation: The Rashi comments are linked to the biblical text with the parenthetical numbers as shown above.

- (1) Rashi explains that continual means *continually* (every day) not *continuously* (every moment). English has such a distinction but the Hebrew language does not have two separate words.
- (2) (2) and (3) are combined.
- (3) Notice the ABA form indicated by the indentation: DESIGNATE – TO SPEAK – DESIGNATE. The Biblical scholars call this an *inclusio* style (because the narrative is *included* in a surrounding text). I prefer the name ABA signifying that the opening and closing are the same (A...A) but the middle is different (B). In my article *Biblical Formatting*, (Jewish Bible Quarterly, 35(1), 2007, 17—27, on the web), I suggest that ABA is the biblical way to indicate a paragraph just as in English we indicate a paragraph with surrounding white space. The paragraph structure in turn has implication for meaning: Every paragraph has a *theme*, which is *developed*. The theme here is *designation* and the development is *designated for speech (prophecy)* from God to man. Rashi learned this from the paragraph structure. Rashi gives an analogy with a political leader who designates a certain spot for communications
- (4) (4) and (5) are combined.
- (5) We have to explain what *sanctity* or *holiness* means. Throughout the Bible, *sanctity* or *holiness* connotes *simultaneity of abstention and indulgence*. A good example is a formal upper class affair. Yes, you eat and drink there; but your behavior is restrained (abstention!); you don't do everything you might do in a bar or in your private residence. It is *indulgence* with *abstention*; it is a *formal* atmosphere. This *formality* while *indulging* is the essence of *holiness*.

To go further and explain the rest of Rashi we have to understand why *formality* is so important here. Egypt was filled with ritual impurity the opposite of spirituality and holiness. Every act you did was associated with death, sex, or filth. Thereby the Egyptians destroyed

any sense of formality. True, one can *attempt* to make one's dinner table a small Temple, but *other things* are said and exchanged at the dinner table. The idea of a Temple, and prophetic revelation is that there is a unique place where we are formal, we forget about our traditional physical selves, and designate that place exclusively for talking with God with prophecy.

- (6) Note the contrast: *FROM Egypt TO dwell in their midst*. Traditionally, Passover and the Exodus are formulated as a transition from *slavery* to *freedom*. This is true in Talmudic times and today in America and the modern world. But the Bible never uses the phrase *FROM Egypt TO Freedom*. Rather God took us *FROM Egypt in order TO enable us to renew prophecy* and have a formal relationship with him