



# Likkutei Sichos

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*As if He Built the Beis HaMikdash*

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## 1.

### LEKET, PEAH, AND THE FESTIVALS

In the section that speaks about the holidays, after the Torah addresses the sacrifices and the festival of Shavuos, the verse says:<sup>1</sup> “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not completely harvest the corner {*peah*} of your field as you reap and do not gather the gleanings {*leket*} of your harvest...” The Torah commentators explain why the Torah includes the mitzvos of *peah*<sup>2</sup> and *leket*<sup>3</sup> with the mitzvos regarding the festivals:

- a) Ibn Ezra says:<sup>4</sup> The commandment “When you reap the harvest of your land” is mentioned {here} a second time because the festival of Shavuos is when “the first sacrifice of the wheat harvest”<sup>5</sup> is offered. Thus, Scripture warns a person not to forget what he is commanded to do at this time.<sup>6</sup>
- b) Ramban explains: “When you reap the harvest of your land” alludes to the harvest {of the *omer*}<sup>7</sup> mentioned at the beginning of this section. A person may understand the verse as follows: When you enter the land, and you reap the *omer* — “the first of your harvest”<sup>8</sup> — do not completely harvest the corner of that field or gather the gleanings for use for the *omer* sacrifice. This teaches us that this mitzvah {the *omer*} does not supersede these prohibitions {*peah* and *leket*}.
- c) Other commentators<sup>9</sup> explain similarly: The Torah wants to emphasize that the obligations of *peah* and *leket* also apply to the field from which the *omer* was brought. One could reason that since a person has already taken “the first of your harvest” from this field, he has already offered a sacrifice

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<sup>1</sup> *Vayikra* 23:22.

<sup>2</sup> {The obligation to leave a corner of your field for the poor.}

<sup>3</sup> {The obligation to leave ears of grain that fall to the ground at the time of harvest for the poor.}

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Chizkuni on our verse; note also Rashbam on our verse.

<sup>5</sup> {*Shemos* 34:22.}

<sup>6</sup> {We are commanded to offer the *shte'i ha'lechem* on Shavuos, which is the first sacrifice offered from the wheat harvest from the new harvest.}

<sup>7</sup> {The *omer* was the first sacrifice offered from the barley harvest, offered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Pesach.}

<sup>8</sup> {*Vayikra* 23:10.}

<sup>9</sup> Kli Yakar; Or HaChaim; Abarbanel.

to Hashem and fulfilled a mitzvah with the harvest of this field. Therefore, a person might think that he is exempt from fulfilling the mitzvos of *peah* and *leket* from this field.<sup>10</sup>

In light of the above, we must clarify why, in his commentary, Rashi quotes the following teaching from *Toras Kohanim*:<sup>11</sup>

Rabbi Avardimas, the son of Rabbi Yossi, said, “Why did the Torah place discussion of these commandments in the middle of its discussion of the festivals with the mitzvos of Pesach and Shavuot preceding it, and the mitzvos of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkos following? To teach that whoever gives *leket*, *shichecha*,<sup>12</sup> and *peah* to the poor properly, it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered his sacrifices therein.”

We must clarify why Rashi quotes an (Aggadic) exposition from *Toras Kohanim* to address this difficulty. Why does Rashi not explain this simply, similar to the above explanations?

It makes sense why Rashi, in his commentary that is based on *pshat*,<sup>13</sup> does not want to offer the explanation of the Ramban (and of some of the other commentators).<sup>14</sup> According to Ramban’s explanation, this verse (“when you reap...”) should have been written “at the beginning of this *parshah*” immediately following the commandment regarding the *omer* harvest. The explanation provided by Ibn Ezra, however, is seemingly a simple and adequate explanation that is consistent with the *pshat*.

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<sup>10</sup> {To negate this line of reasoning, the Torah includes the mitzvos of *peah* and *leket* in the section dealing with the Festivals.}

<sup>11</sup> Rashi on *Vayikra* 23:22.

<sup>12</sup> {The obligation to leave stalks of grain forgotten in the field for the poor.}

<sup>13</sup> {The plain meaning of Scripture. Rashi says in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: “I have come only to explain the straightforward meaning of the Scripture.” Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

<sup>14</sup> {The simple understanding of the verse.}

## 2.

### TWO EXPLANATIONS UNDER ONE CAPTION

We will resolve this difficulty by prefacing with an examination of the nuanced wording in Rashi's commentary:

Rashi quotes the phrase, “when you reap,”<sup>15</sup> and comments: “The Torah repeated {the commandment to leave *peah*} so that its violator will be guilty of transgressing two prohibitions.” Only later {under the same caption},<sup>16</sup> Rashi continues, “Rabbi Avardimas, the son of Rabbi Yose, said...,” as discussed.

We must clarify: As known, whenever Rashi brings a second, unrelated interpretation to clarify a single {problematic} point or word, Rashi's practice<sup>17</sup> is to write this interpretation under a **separate** caption {in a separate gloss}.

Here, Rashi combines both interpretations in the same gloss, which indicates that these two interpretations are interrelated. Seemingly, however, these two interpretations address two unrelated topics: “The Torah repeated {the commandment to leave *peah*} so that its violator will be guilty of transgressing two prohibitions” has no apparent connection to the teaching of Rabbi Avardimas, which addresses why the Torah's discussion of these *mitzvos* {*peah* and *leket*} are inserted in the middle of its discussion of the festivals.

We also need to clarify several nuances in Rashi's explanation:

- a) As known,<sup>18</sup> Rashi quotes a teaching in the name of its author only when knowing the name of the author provides additional clarity to what is being taught (which is useful for a seasoned student). {How does quoting Rabbi Avardimas by name contribute clarity?}

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<sup>15</sup> Rashi does not add “etcetera.” This indicates that Rashi means to highlight the entire verse.

<sup>16</sup> {“*Dibbur hamaschil*” in the Hebrew original. Rashi begins each gloss with a quote from the verse, known as a *dibbur hamaschil*.}

<sup>17</sup> See *Bereishis* 1:1; *Vayikra*, 21:1.

<sup>18</sup> {This principle is mentioned numerous times in *Likkutei Sichos*. For example see, vol. 5, p. 31, and fn. 21. See *Klalei Rashi*, p. 115-116. After all, if the author's name was irrelevant to Rashi's interpretation, there would be no reason for Rashi to mention it.}

- b) Rashi poses a detailed and lengthy question: “...Pesach and Shavuot preceding it, and the mitzvos of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos following?” Why isn’t Rashi content to ask more concisely: “Why did the Torah place discussion of these mitzvos in the middle of its discussion of the festivals?”
- c) Scripture only mentions *peah* and *leket*. Why does Rashi add *shichecha*?<sup>19</sup>

[Although this is the wording of Rabbi Avardimas in *Toras Kohanim*, Rashi’s practice in his commentary (as mentioned several times) is not to quote all the words of the **speaker**. Rather, his practice is to quote only the part relevant to *pshat*.<sup>20</sup> (Doing so would be particularly expected here, as Rashi does not introduce his remark with the phrase, “It says in *Toras Kohanim*,” or the like.)<sup>21</sup>

By quoting the entirety of this teaching, however, Rashi indicates that the teaching in its entirety is (also) relevant to *pshat*.]

### 3.

#### NUANCES IN RASHI’S DICTION

The above difficulty is even greater because in any case, Rashi alters quite a few details in the wording of this teaching from the way it appears in *Toras Kohanim*:

- 1) *Toras Kohanim* says, “Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur following,” whereas Rashi adds, “and Sukkos.”

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Rashi changes the order (as does *Toras Kohanim*) from the order in the verse, which first mentions *peah* (“Do not completely harvest the corner of your field”), and then mentions *leket* (“the gleanings of your harvest”); Rashi writes, “*leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah*.”

<sup>20</sup> In fact, here, in this gloss, Rashi omits the conclusion of R. Avardimas’ teaching as found in *Toras Kohanim*.

<sup>21</sup> {If Rashi wrote such a preamble, we would expect him to quote *Toras Kohanim* verbatim.}

- 2) *Toras Kohanim* says, “*leket, shichecha, peah, and maaser ani...*”<sup>22</sup> whereas Rashi **omits** “*maaser ani.*”
- 3) *Toras Kohanim* says, “whoever **removes...**” whereas Rashi says, “whoever gives *leket...* to the poor properly.”
- 4) *Toras Kohanim* says, “It is considered as if the *Beis HaMikdash* **stands** and he offers his sacrifices in it,” whereas Rashi says, “It is considered as if he **built** the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered his sacrifices therein.”

Apparently, Rashi had a variant version of the teaching of Rabbi Avardimas in *Toras Kohanim*, since Rashi quotes this teaching in his name. However, this itself requires clarification: Why did Rashi specifically choose **this** version (as Rashi quotes it) and not the standard, common version?

By choosing specifically this version, Rashi demonstrates that it is (more) fitting and reasonable according to *pshat*.

#### 4.

#### ONE FINAL QUESTION

Further on,<sup>23</sup> Rashi quotes “you shall leave” {תעזוב} and comments: “Leave it before them<sup>24</sup> and *they* shall gather it, and you may not assist {any} one of them {to gather}.”

Commentators<sup>25</sup> ask: Why does Rashi explain the phrase, “you shall leave,” in this *parshah* for the first time, and not **earlier**, in *parshas Kedoshim*? There, the same wording is used (for the first time)!

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<sup>22</sup> {A portion of a person’s harvest that must be given to the poor during the third and sixth years of the seven year *shemita* cycle.}

<sup>23</sup> {*Vayikra* 23:22.}

<sup>24</sup> {This refers to *peah* and *leket* left for “the poor and the convert.”}

<sup>25</sup> *Sifsei Chachamim* with attribution to *Nachalas Yaakov*.

## 5.

### RASHI'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE VERSE

The explanation for all of the above:

The fact that this verse, “When you reap...” is recorded here (in the **general** discussion regarding the festivals and not in a passage that discusses these specific mitzvos) does not pose a difficulty **according to pshat** (Rashi’s approach in his commentary).

Simply understood, this verse is a thematic continuation of the above-mentioned mitzvos (in this passage) which the verse discusses in relation to the grain harvest. This passage begins earlier,<sup>26</sup> “When you enter the land... and you reap its harvest... you shall bring the *omer*...” Next,<sup>27</sup> it states the mitzvah of the “**new minchah**”<sup>28</sup> that is brought on Shavuos from the **new** wheat. In continuation to this, the Torah outlines more mitzvos that are related to the grain harvest.

Rashi’s (primary) focus is to explain why the Torah cautions us regarding the mitzvos of *leket* and *peah* a **second** time (following the same command in *parshas Kedoshim*, as Ibn Ezra emphasizes: “The reason it is mentioned... a second time”). Rashi explains: “The Torah repeated {the commandment to leave *peah*} so that its violator will be guilty of transgressing two prohibitions.”

[For this very reason, we can understand why Rashi does not explain this verse in a manner similar to Ibn Ezra’s explanation, that “Scripture warns a person not to forget what he is commanded to do...”]:

In *parshas Kedoshim*, the Torah juxtaposes the commandments about *leket* and *peah* with the verse,<sup>29</sup> “Do not harvest the young grapes of your vineyard and do not gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard.” Consequently, if the

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<sup>26</sup> *Vayikra* 23:10.

<sup>27</sup> *Vayikra* 23:16.

<sup>28</sup> {In the Hebrew original, מנחה חדשה.}

<sup>29</sup> *Vayikra* 19:10.

Torah must repeat the mitzvos about {providing for} the poor so that a person won't forget them, the Torah should have repeated also the mitzvah “do not harvest the young grapes of your vineyard, and... the fallen fruit...”

We can conclude, therefore, that there is no concern that a person will forget these mitzvos (or the like). This is the case with most mitzvos. The Torah does not repeat them (not even when speaking about the time-period of the specific mitzvah) in order to prevent a person from forgetting to fulfill them.

Consequently, Rashi learns that the purpose for the Torah repeating this mitzvah is “so that its violator will be guilty of transgressing two prohibitions.” The fact that the Torah establishes that a person transgresses “two prohibitions” specifically with respect to these mitzvos poses no difficulty. Rashi himself explains,<sup>30</sup> “There are many mitzvos in the Torah that were said {once} and then repeated... to make one culpable and to exact punishment according to the number of prohibitions among them.” (According to the *pshat*, one cannot ask why **these** mitzvos were distinguished from the other mitzvos in this respect.)]

## 6.

### A REPEATED COMMANDMENT

Specifically **following this** explanation, the question (mainly) arises “Why did the Torah place discussion of these commandments **in the middle** of its discussion of the festivals?” This difficulty only arises because “in the middle its discussion of the festivals” refers to “Pesach and Shavuot preceding it, and the mitzvos of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos following.” The explanation:

If the Scriptural warning, “when you reap...” would refer to a new command regarding *leket* and *peah*, we could then explain as above: The verse places the mitzvos of *leket* and *peah* here as a thematic continuation of its discussion of the other mitzvos that are related to the grain harvest. Since this is

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<sup>30</sup> Rashi on *Shemos* 34:23.



a new command and prohibition, the Torah places it here so that a person should not think that as soon as he is finished fulfilling the mitzvos mentioned **here** in connection to the harvest, he has **completed** all of the mitzvos related to harvesting (and so he can now finish reaping and take the entire harvest home for himself — **similar** to the explanation offered by some of the commentators in Section 1.) Rather, “when you reap the harvest of your land,” there are **additional** mitzvos that a person must fulfill before he can derive benefit the harvest: “Do not completely harvest the corner of your field... and do not gather the gleanings of your harvest.”

However, since this Scriptural warning<sup>31</sup> is intended only to make “its violator... guilty of transgressing two prohibitions,” it only makes sense to record the verse here (and not in a section thematically similar to the one where it is first recorded) if this Scriptural warning is somehow related to the **subject** of this section. (Because there is no need for Torah to **forestall** this action here {with a Scriptural warning} since we have learnt about the prohibition earlier, as discussed above.)

In our case, however, the {cautionary} verse is inserted between matters whose (primary) subject is (not so much the mitzvos related to harvesting, but to) the mitzvah of (the festival)<sup>32</sup> sacrifices. The proof: “Pesach and Shavuot preceding it, and the mitzvos of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur (and Sukkos) following.” (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur have no relation to [the] grain [harvest].) This implies that the entire section focuses mainly on the festival sacrifices. Why, then, do we include here the Scriptural warning (that makes “its violator... guilty of transgressing two prohibitions”) regarding *leket* and *peah*?

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<sup>31</sup> {In the original Hebrew, “*azharah*.”}

<sup>32</sup> See Ramban on *Vayikra* 23:2; Rashi on *Vayikra* 23:8,25.

## ORDINARY TZEDAKAH VS LEKET, SHICHECHA, AND PEAH

Regarding this question comes Rashi's answer, "To teach that whoever gives *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* to the poor properly, it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered his sacrifices therein."

The explanation:

The connection and equivalence between giving gifts to the poor and offering sacrifices is understood:<sup>33</sup> The section dealing with the sacrifices begins: "When a person from among you will bring — and not from stolen goods"<sup>34</sup> — a person brings and gives away from that which he owns to (the Altar and the *kohen*, in accord with the commandment from) Hashem. Similarly, when giving gifts to the poor, the person also fulfills Hashem's command to give (from his grain to the poor — he gives away) from that which he owns to (the poor, in compliance with the command of) Hashem.

Although this is true whenever a person gives *tzedakah*<sup>35</sup> {i.e., he fulfills Hashem's command}, this is more accentuated and uniquely expressed with the gifts of *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah*:

Ordinary *tzedakah* can occasionally be given from money that a person receives without toil (from an effortless business transaction, as an inheritance, by finding lost money, or the like). It is only because "he could have purchased sustenance for himself" that {when he gives money that he obtained effortlessly to *tzedakah*, it is considered that} he has given away "his sustenance."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See *Gur Aryeh* on *Vayikra* 23:22.

<sup>34</sup> {Paraphrased from} Rashi on *Vayikra* 1:2.

<sup>35</sup> {Charity.}

<sup>36</sup> *Tanya*, ch. 37 (48b).

In contrast, the grain that a person gives away as *peah* and *leket*, etc., he obtains by exerting effort in plowing and planting, etc., and then harvesting — “by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.”<sup>37</sup>

As such, the teaching of Rabbi Avardimas in *Toras Kohanim* — “It is considered as if the *Beis HaMikdash* stands and he offers his sacrifices in it” — is particularly relevant to *leket*, *shichecha*, *peah*, and *maaser ani*, but not to ordinary *tzedakah*.

Rashi explicates this point with additional emphasis: A person’s toil to produce grain from the land, which he then gives away to the poor, is (not only considered as if he offered sacrifices, but is) “considered as if he **built** the *Beis HaMikdash*.” Meaning, his hard work is analogous to the **service** and **toil** that went into **building** the *Beis HaMikdash*, which had to be done before he could bring sacrifices there. (After all, he may benefit from the bread, etc., which he makes from his crops, only after he has given *leket*, *peah*, etc. And then afterward {before he may benefit from the bread}, he still needs to separate *terumah*<sup>38</sup> and *maaser*<sup>39</sup> from the grain that he keeps.)

## 8.

### TWO WAYS TO GIVE

This comparison — “It is considered as if the *Beis HaMikdash* stands” or he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and “offered his sacrifices” — has two components:

- a) Giving of oneself — on account of Hashem’s command — something from which “he could have purchased sustenance for himself”; and beyond that, something that he got by toiling energetically and applying his innermost abilities.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Bereishis* 3:19.

<sup>38</sup> {Gifts a person is obligated to give to a *Kohen* after he brings his harvest into his home.}

<sup>39</sup> {Gifts a person is obligated to give to a Levite after he brings his harvest into his home.}

<sup>40</sup> {In the original Hebrew, “כוהנת נפשו.”}

b) Giving this item — according to Hashem’s command — to a **poor person**.

The difference between these two components: If the main point is how precious it is for a person to give away something to which he has devoted his energy,<sup>41</sup> then it is not (terribly) relevant how the pauper receives it.

If, however, the main point is the “giving,” then how it was given is relevant — it must be the perfect “giving.”

This is the difference between the wording used in the teaching of Rabbi Avardimas as stated in *Toras Kohanim* and as explained in Rashi’s commentary: In *Toras Kohanim*, the above *chiddush*<sup>42</sup> and comparison (of *leket*, etc., to the sacrifices) is in the wording whoever “**removes**” the grain from his field, etc. Therefore, *shichecha* and *maaser ani* are included for they are — according to Hashem’s commandment — **precisely analogous** to *leket* and *peah*. In all of these cases, he **removes** the grain, which he obtained through his sweat, from his possession.

In contrast, Rashi — who emphasizes that the person “**gives... to the poor properly**” — only adds *shichecha*. Only *shichecha* is analogous to *leket* and *peah* in regards to the giving being done properly — this means:

These three mitzvos (*leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah*) are analogous because (not only does a person give away things in which he had invested his energy, but) the giving is done in the ideal manner: The giver does not (even) receive<sup>43</sup> *tovas hanaah*<sup>44</sup> (he “gives... properly”), which he would if he were to give these gifts to his manservant, his maidservant, or to poor people he is acquainted with, or the like.

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<sup>41</sup> {In the original, “געבונדען מיט חיות נפשו”; lit., “linked with the vitality of his soul.”}

<sup>42</sup> {A novel idea.}

<sup>43</sup> *Chulin* 131a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 1, par. 8; this is understood based on the *pshat* of the verse in *parshas Kedoshim* {*Vayikra* 19:10}.

<sup>44</sup> {The right to choose the person to whom he will give. Consequently, the recipient will have “good will” toward his benefactor — an intangible, potential benefit.}

Rashi omits *maaser ani*, for the giver does receive *tovas hana'ah*<sup>45</sup> — he can give these gifts to any poor man he chooses (his relatives, or the like).

For this reason, the comparison “as if he **built** the *Beis HaMikdash*” (rather than “{as if} the *Beis HaMikdash* stands”) is more appropriate. Building the *Beis HaMikdash* is done by expending effort and is intended for the benefit of each and every Jew — the **entire** Jewish people, in contrast to “it is considered as if... **he** offers **his** sacrifices in it” — for himself.

## 9.

### WHY RASHI OMITTS *MAASER ANI* AND THE VINEYARD

The following difficulty arises: All of the above details of *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* are analogous to the details of the young grapes and fallen fruit {of your vineyard} which the Torah discusses together upon the first mention of *leket* and *peah*. Why, then, does Rabbi Avardimas not include the young grapes and fallen fruit? Although they are omitted from the verse here {which may justify their omission in Rabbi Avardimas' teaching}, he does include *shichecha*, which is not mentioned in the verse {either}.

To address this, Rashi quotes the version of Rabbi Avardimas' teaching, “Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, **and Sukkos** following.” This emphasizes that this verse addresses the season which precedes Sukkos — before the time that “you gather in the crop of the land”<sup>46</sup> (the festival of Sukkos). Therefore, it is appropriate to mention only *shichecha*, which pertains to the “harvest of your land.” The mitzvos of “the young grapes and fallen fruit” is unrelated, as **their** season is later on (around the days of Sukkos).

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<sup>45</sup> *Chulin* 131a: “There is *tovas hana'ah* regarding *maaser ani* distributed **within one's household** (see Rashi, loc. cit., s.v., “*yesh bahen*”), in contrast to that which is distributed in the granary. (*Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 6, par. 10; *Tosafos* on *Chulin* 131a, s.v., “*maaser ani*” based on *Sifri*; similarly, see *Nedarim* 84b; *Ran* and *Tosafos HaRosh*, loc. cit.)

<sup>46</sup> *Vayikra* 23:39.

This **further** clarifies why Rashi (quotes the version that ) omits *maaser ani*. Because *maaser ani* was also normally given together with the *maaser* gifts from “your wine vat, etc.,”<sup>47</sup> during the gathering season<sup>48</sup> (which is also after the time that the grain and fruit are harvested and brought into the home) during the Sukkos season, as discussed above.

We can posit that also for this reason *maaser ani* is not entirely analogous to *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* (regarding the statement that “whoever gives... it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered his sacrifices therein”): *Maaser ani* is not given annually (unlike *leket*, etc.), but rather, it is given once every three years. Therefore, its giving does not exemplify (as much) that a person is thereby surrendering his own sustenance as much as the other mentioned mitzvos.

The same idea applies to {the fruit of} the vineyard which is not essential (sustenance) for a person. Additionally, the effort expended in a vineyard, i.e., planting, etc., does not involve the same lengthy process every year like the grain of the field.

## 10.

### NO BENEFIT FOR THE GIVER

Following this explanation, Rashi continues:<sup>49</sup> “*You shall leave* — Leave it before them and *they* shall gather it, and you may not assist {any} one of them {to gather}.”

Rashi does not need to explain this at the first mention of this mitzvah (in *parshas Kedoshim*) where it says,<sup>50</sup> “for the poor and the convert you shall leave them.” It is simply understood that the Torah intends to define the mitzvos of *peah* and *leket*, etc.: “Do not completely harvest the corner of your field... do not

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<sup>47</sup> {*Devarim* 16:13.}

<sup>48</sup> See *Devarim* 14:28 ff; *Devarim* 26:12, and Rashi’s commentary.

<sup>49</sup> {*Vayikra* 23:22.}

<sup>50</sup> {*Vayikra* 19:10.}

gather the gleanings of your harvest... (rather) for the poor and the convert you shall leave them.”<sup>51</sup> The meaning of “you shall leave them” means what it says {i.e., leave them for the poor rather than assisting them}.

In contrast, in *parshas Emor* we already know the substance of, and manner in which to fulfill, these mitzvos — *peah* and *leket* must be left for the poor. The verse repeats “when you reap... do not completely harvest the corner of your field” **here**, in order to teach that “whoever gives *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* to the poor properly, it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and has offered...” As discussed, this is to emphasize that the giving is done properly and completely such that the owner of the field does not even receive *tovas hana’ah*.

We can conclude that this additional clause — “for the poor and the convert you shall leave them” (which we already know from *parshas Kedoshim*) — is mentioned in order to emphasize the theme of optimal giving on the part of the giver (and consequently — negating his receipt of any benefit {even the benefit of choosing the recipient}). Therefore, Rashi explains, “Leave it before them and *they* shall gather it, and you may not assist {any} one of them {to gather}.” Not only does the giver not choose **which** poor person to give to, but furthermore, he cannot even derive benefit by helping the poor take the gifts — they take them entirely on their own.

## 11.

### RABBI AVARDIMAS’ PASSION

A seasoned student can still raise the following difficulty regarding the teaching of Rabbi Avardimas: “Whoever gives *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* {to the poor} properly, it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash*...”:

What is the great virtue in the act of giving something away without receiving *tovas hana’ah*?

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<sup>51</sup> {*Vayikra* 19:9,10.}

[Especially since the gift usually isn't very large: One or two fallen stalks for *leket*, a few forgotten items, or stalks in the corner of the field (of which the verse does not specify a minimum amount. Biblically, there is no minimum required amount<sup>52</sup> {for *peah*} — “even if a person has left one stalk, he has fulfilled his obligation.”<sup>53</sup> Even rabbinically, the minimum size is 1/60<sup>th</sup>, etc.)

True, since producing these gifts requires toil, even a small amount is precious to him. Nevertheless, according to Rashi, the **manner** of the giving is the primary focus: “Whoever gives *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* to the poor **properly**.” In that case:]

What is the big deal {about a person who gives these small gifts} that it is considered “as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered his sacrifices therein”?

To resolve this difficulty, Rashi (also) quotes the author of the teaching, *Rabbi Avardimas*:

Our Sages say in the *Jerusalem Talmud*<sup>54</sup> that Yehudah from Huzi hid himself in a cave for three days because he wanted to find out “on what basis {giving *tzedakah* to provide} the necessities of life for {the inhabitants of} one's own city has precedence over the necessities of life for {the inhabitants of} another city. He came to Rabbi Yossi...” Rabbi Yossi called his son, Rabbi Avardimas, telling him to explain to the fellow “on what basis the necessities of life for {the inhabitants of} one's own city has precedence over the necessities of life for {the inhabitants of} another city. Rabbi Avardimas replied, “These cities shall be”<sup>55</sup> — “every single city shall be,” and then {the verse says}, “its open spaces all around it.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Peah* 1:1.

<sup>53</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*, ch. 1, par. 15.

<sup>54</sup> *Jerusalem Talmud*, “*Shevi'is*,” ch. 8, sec. 5.

<sup>55</sup> *Yehoshua* 21:40.

<sup>56</sup> {In his analysis of this verse, Avardimas pointed out that the verse says “every single city” before “its open spaces all around it,” implying homiletically that one's own city takes precedence over other cities “around it.”



Why did Rabbi Yossi have to summon his son Avardimas to answer the question? Why didn't Rabbi Yossi himself teach Yehudah the source for this ruling, especially since he (Rabbi Yossi) was the one who expounded this ruling?

In light of these questions, we can conclude that this subject was Rabbi Avardimas' unique focus. (This is similar to what the *Gemara* says<sup>57</sup> regarding Rabbi Yehudah's era that "all of their learning was confined to *Seder Nezikin*,<sup>58</sup> and regarding Rabbi Akiva,<sup>59</sup> "Take yourself to the topics of *negaiim* and *ohalos*"<sup>60</sup> {for those were his fields of expertise}, and there are other examples.) He was particularly passionate about the ruling that "giving *tzedakah* to provide the necessities of life for {the inhabitants of} one's own city has precedence {over the necessities of life for the inhabitants of another city}." Therefore, Rabbi Yossi called him to teach this ruling.

Meaning, the teachings of Rabbi Avardimas focused on this idea that according to Torah, those poor who are closer to a person (even if this closeness is limited to the fact that they reside in the same city) take precedence over the poor who are further from him.

According to his approach, we understand the great *chiddush* in our discussion that "whoever gives *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* to the poor **properly**, it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered...." The conduct that is required while giving *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah* is that he may **not** give precedence to those poor who are closer to him (or to the poor of his city). This is contrary to a person's nature, as it is intended to be according to Torah, as discussed.

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<sup>57</sup> *Berachos* 20a.

<sup>58</sup> {The *Order of Damages*, the fourth of the six orders of the *Mishnah*.}

<sup>59</sup> *Chagigah* 14a.

<sup>60</sup> {Lit., "plagues and tents," two tractates dealing with ritual impurity.}

## 12.

### THE DEFINITION OF THE MITZVAH

In light of all of the above discussion, some “wondrous” *halachic* teachings (which can be derived from Rashi’s commentary) can be proposed:

**Rambam** rules<sup>61</sup> that *peah* (as well as *leket* and *shichecha*) is a *lav ha’nitak le’asei*:<sup>62</sup> If a person sins and “harvests his entire field,” without leaving any corner uncut, he must “take a portion of what was cut... and **give it** to the poor. Giving this grain is a positive commandment, **as it says**, ‘for the poor and the convert you shall leave them.’”<sup>63</sup>

According to (the above explanation of) **Rashi**, however, based on the simple understanding of the verse, we can derive that Rashi maintains that this mitzvah is not a *lav ha’nitak le’asei*. The verse, “for the poor...” does not introduce a new obligatory mitzvah that **commutes** the prohibition by **giving** these gifts to the poor.

Rashi learns that the clause, “for the poor and the convert you shall leave them,” in *parshas Kedoshim* **describes** how to **uphold** the prohibition. Namely, the verse, “Do not completely harvest the corner of your field” is accomplished by, “for the poor and the convert **you shall leave** them.” The repetition of the command, “for the poor and the convert you shall leave them,” in *parshas Emor*, even more so, comes to expand the degree to which a person may **not** benefit. It precludes a person from even benefiting by choosing to whom he will **give**.

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<sup>61</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 1, par. 2-5; *Sefer HaMitzvos*, positive mitzvos 120-1, prohibitions 210, 214.

<sup>62</sup> {Lit., a prohibition that is commuted to a positive commandment. Unlike most prohibitions in the Torah, if one violates such a prohibition, it can be “commuted” through the fulfillment of the positive aspect of the same commandment. For example, according to Rambam, if a person violated this commandment and did not leave a corner of his field for the poor, he can fix this sin by fulfilling the positive aspect of the mitzvah and give the gifts now from the cut grain. If a person violates a *lav ha’nitak le’asei*, he is not given lashes until such time that fulfilling the positive command is no longer possible.}

<sup>63</sup> The wording of *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 1, par. 2.

Put differently: Giving *leket* and *peah* “to the poor and the convert” in a manner in which “you shall leave them” — the poor should take the gifts for themselves and the giver does not receive *tovas hana’ah* by giving it to them — is not (a secondary or) an additional component within the mitzvos of *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah*.<sup>64</sup> Rather, this establishes the mitzvah’s parameters: The mitzvah is not (only) to “**remove** *leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah*,” but to (also) **give** (*leket*, *shichecha*, and *peah*) to the poor **properly** — “for the poor and the convert you shall leave them.”

### 13.

#### WINE OF TORAH

On this basis, we can derive a lesson from the “wine of Torah”<sup>65</sup> in Rashi’s commentary: We see the great importance of fulfilling a mitzvah altruistically — even an easy mitzvah that {biblically} can be fulfilled with one stalk (as mentioned in Section 11) — without self-interest and without receiving benefit.

We also see, on the other hand, the great importance of *iskafya*<sup>66</sup> — “bending” the evil inclination. It applies to the extent that “if you see the donkey of your enemy crouching under its burden... you shall repeatedly help him.”<sup>67</sup> “This mitzvah concerns the donkey of someone’s enemy, requiring a person to subjugate his evil inclination {by assisting his enemy}.”<sup>68</sup> Fulfilling the mitzvah of *leket*, etc.,<sup>69</sup> in a way that is contrary to nature — based on the directives of Torah (since when giving regular *tzedakah*, the poor of one’s own city takes precedence)<sup>70</sup> — is so meritorious that on account of this specifically, “it is considered as if he built the *Beis HaMikdash* and offered his sacrifices therein.”

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<sup>64</sup> In line with a straightforward reading of Rambam’s wording, loc. cit. par. 8.

<sup>65</sup> {The deeper parts of Torah.}

<sup>66</sup> {Lit., bending, the *avodah* of a person subduing his negative impulses and urges.}

<sup>67</sup> *Shemos* 23:5.

<sup>68</sup> *Bava Metzia* 32b.

<sup>69</sup> {As well as *shichechah* and *peah*, as discussed above.}

<sup>70</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 251, par. 3.

When a person labors to “change his nature,” and also to “transform the nature of his {good} characteristics,”<sup>71</sup> the person will no longer just be considered “**as if**” he had built the Third *Beis HaMikdash*.<sup>72</sup> Rather, through such *avodah*, we will merit to see the actual building the Third *Beis HaMikdash*. “And there we will offer to You... in accordance with the command of Your will”<sup>73</sup> — in the Third *Beis HaMikdash* that will be built speedily in our days, in actuality.

— From a talk delivered on *Motzei Shabbos parshas Emor*, 5738 (1978)

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<sup>71</sup> See *Likkutei Dibburim*, vol. 1, 56a, et passim; this is explained in *HaTamim*, journal 3, p, 66; see *Kesser Shem Tov*, sec. 24, the citation from Rabbi Saadia Gaon.

<sup>72</sup> See *Likkutei Dibburim*, *ibid.*, the maxim of the Alter Rebbe: “The whole point of Chassidus is for a person to change the nature of his {natural} characteristics.” Consider that Moshiach’s coming depends upon the dissemination of the wellsprings (of Chassidus) outward.

<sup>73</sup> {*Musaf Amidah* for Festivals.}