



# Likkutei Sichos

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## *Chadash* in the Diaspora

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## 1.

### WHY RASHI MUST EXPLAIN

The verse states,<sup>1</sup> “You shall not eat bread, roasted grain or fresh grain... until you bring the offering... in all your dwelling places.”<sup>2</sup> Rashi comments:

The Sages of Israel differ concerning this. Some<sup>3</sup> learn from here that the law of *chadash* applies also outside the Land of Israel. Others<sup>4</sup> maintain that this phrase comes to teach that the Jewish people were commanded regarding the new crop only after possession and settlement after they had conquered and apportioned the land.

The reason why Rashi deems it necessary to explain the words, “in all your dwelling places” **at all** will be explained below.

Seemingly, the simple meaning of the quoted phrase is “in all places where you settle” (no matter where). Furthermore, this phrase, “in all your dwelling places,” appears in the Torah in connection to many other *mitzvos* (some of which **precede** our verse), and in the majority of cases, Rashi does **not** explain its usage. Why, here, does Rashi deem an explanation to be necessary?

In truth {however, Rashi had reason to explain this phrase here}: **Earlier** in *parshas Tzav*<sup>5</sup> (regarding the prohibition of eating blood) the verse also states, “in all your dwelling places.” Rashi comments over there, “Since this prohibition is an obligation that devolves upon the person<sup>6</sup> rather than on the land, it applies in all dwelling places.” *Chadash* is an obligation necessitated by

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<sup>1</sup> *Vayikra* 23:14.

<sup>2</sup> {This verse serves as the source for the *mitzvah* commonly known as “*chadash*,” an admonition not to eat grain from the new harvest until the second day of *Pesach*, the time when the *Omer* barley sacrifice was brought in the Temple. The prohibited grain is called “*chadash*,” which literally means, “new.” Grain planted during or after *Pesach* is *chadash* and is not permitted until the following *Pesach*. Any grain that took root before the second day of *Pesach* becomes *Yoshon*, lit. “old,” after the second day of *Pesach* and is permitted.}

<sup>3</sup> *Toras Kohanim* on *Vayikra* 23:14; *Kiddushin* 37a.

<sup>4</sup> *Kiddushin* 37a.

<sup>5</sup> *Vayikra* 7:26.

<sup>6</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*chovas ha’guf*”; lit., “an obligation of the body.”}

the land,<sup>7</sup> and not placed on people. Furthermore, **understood simply**, the prohibition of *chadash* relates to the *omer*<sup>8</sup> “of the first of your harvest” {as the verse states} “*k’tzirah*<sup>9</sup> {**its** harvest}<sup>10</sup> (i.e., “land’s” harvest). Thus, we would think that *chadash* does not apply “in all your dwelling places.”

Therefore, Rashi writes that nonetheless, “some learn *from here* that the law of *chadash* applies also outside the Land of Israel.” Meaning, this extended obligation is derived from the phrase “in all your dwelling places,” and is quite straightforward. That is, this verse teaches us that *chadash* is an exception to the {above-mentioned} principle. Although *chadash* is an obligation related to the land, nonetheless, it applies “**in all** your dwelling places,” even outside the land of Israel.

## 2.

BUT HOW IS THE SECOND ONE *PSHAT*?

However, we must clarify:

If, according to simple *pshat*,<sup>11</sup> the meaning of “in all your dwelling places” accords with the (first) explanation {offered by Rashi, which he prefaces with} “some learn” (i.e., “in all places where you settle,” even outside Israel), why does Rashi also quote the (second) explanation that “in all your dwelling places” means {that *chadash* applies} (only in the Land of Israel, and only) after, “possession and settlement”? Seemingly, based on the above, this explanation does not concur with the **plain sense** of the passage?

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<sup>7</sup> {In the original Hebrew, “*chovas karka.*”}

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

<sup>9</sup> {In Hebrew, the suffix, ה, may indicate the possessive case.}

<sup>10</sup> {We will appreciate the nuance by first looking at the whole verse: “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: When you come to the Land which I am giving you, and you reap *k’tzirah* {its harvest}, you shall bring to the *kohen* an *Omer* of the first of your harvest.” The word “*k’tzirah*,” spelled in Hebrew קצירה, contains a dot in the letter *hey* at the end of the word which changes the pronunciation and meaning. The pronunciation changes from *k’tzira* to *k’tzirah*, with the “ah” last syllable emphasized. The meaning changes from, “harvest,” to, “its harvest,” emphasizing the harvest of the land.}

<sup>11</sup> {The simple meaning of the text.}

A more perplexing difficulty:

As discussed many times, whenever Rashi **adds** a prefatory remark — before beginning to explain the verse — indicating that there are two (or several) explanations, he intends to emphasize that within *pshat*, these explanations have equivalent weight. (Rashi places one explanation before the other simply in his commentary because writing two explanations at once is impossible.)

So, too, in our context: Rashi adds a prefatory remark, “The Sages of Israel differ concerning this.” He does so to point out that the (second) interpretation, “to teach that they were commanded regarding the new crop only after possession and settlement,” is **not** “further” from *pshat* than the (first) one, i.e., “in all your dwelling places” includes all inhabited lands even outside Israel.

But we need to clarify: We can posit that Rashi has to offer his second interpretation because his first one can be challenged, “Why should an obligation relating to the land, like *chadash*, apply outside Israel?” But even so, how can we suggest that **this** interpretation, “in all your dwelling places” (“after possession and settlement”) is equivalent, according to *pshat*, to the simple and plain meaning of the words, “in all your dwelling places,” as mentioned? (Additionally, Rashi gives this interpretation **whenever** these words appear {in the Torah}!)

### 3.

LAND MITZVOS SHOULD ONLY APPLY IN ISRAEL

The explanation:

Regarding the prohibition to castrate any animal, wild or domesticated (**previously**, in our *parshah*), the Torah says,<sup>12</sup> “...**and in your land**, you shall not do so.” Rashi explains:

The Torah says, “in your land,” to include all species found in your land. For we cannot suggest that Torah commands us to refrain from castrating

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<sup>12</sup> *Vayikra* 22:24.

animals only in the land of Israel. After all, castration is a personal obligation,<sup>13</sup> and all personal obligations apply in Israel and outside Israel.

From here we see that the principle, “any personal obligation applies in Israel and outside Israel” is so strong that even when expounding the phrase “in your land” according to *pshat*,<sup>14</sup> the simple {semantic} translation is **relinquished** in order not to contradict this principle.

[In this case, Rashi did not employ the homiletic method of *drash*<sup>15</sup> to clarify “the words of the verses, each word in its proper way,”<sup>16</sup> for the purpose of solving a difficulty with *pshat*. This is clear since Rashi does *not* say that the interpretation, “to include any species found in your land” comes from *drash*. (Additionally, Rashi does not say that his interpretation is based on the teachings of our Rabbis.)<sup>17</sup> Rather, he presents this interpretation as the *pshat*. Meaning, within the framework of *pshat*, we must **alter** the meaning of the phrase, “in your land” (from its semantic meaning) to avoid contravening the rule, “all commandments associated with a person....”]

Thus, the same approach must be used when applying the second half of the principle that “an obligation associated with land only applies in Israel.”<sup>18</sup> This principle must be applied **universally** in Torah when expounding the *pshat*, even if doing so changes the (semantic) meaning of a word.

Similarly, in our context, Rashi is not content with the interpretation that *chadash* applies outside Israel, since this interpretation contravenes the principle, “an obligation associated with land only applies in Israel.” Therefore, he brings another interpretation to the phrase, “in all your dwelling places” (namely, “after possession and settlement”). Although **this** interpretation does

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<sup>13</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*chovas ha'guf*.” An obligation placed upon the person, *qua*, person.}

<sup>14</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*pshuto shel mikra*,” often referred to as “*pshat*.” Rashi states in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: “I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Torah.” When the plain meaning is understood clearly, Rashi does not comment. Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

<sup>15</sup> {This term refers to the *drash* method of commentary, which is more analytical than *pshat*. It is an exegetical method of commentary in which the words of a verse are used as a platform to express an extrinsic idea.}

<sup>16</sup> Rashi's commentary on *Bereishis* 3:8.

<sup>17</sup> *Chagigah* 14b.

<sup>18</sup> *Kiddushin* 37a.

not align well {semantically} with the words, “in all your dwelling places,” it does not conflict with the principle discussed above (similar to the explanation mentioned above on the words, “...and in your land, you shall not do so”).

#### 4.

##### THE DIFFICULTY WITH BOTH INTERPRETATIONS

**This** interpretation is also not so smooth, however (and therefore, Rashi also cites the interpretation that “from here {some derive that} the law of *chadash* applies also outside the Land of Israel”). For the Torah says, “in all your dwelling places” concerning many other *mitzvos*, and in all other instances where this is said, the intent is that the obligation applies outside Israel.

It emerges that to interpret the phrase “in all your dwelling places” as meaning “after possession and settlement,” is to make an **exception** as to how this phrase is understood in all the other places in Torah! Therefore, Rashi (also) brings the first interpretation.

On this basis, we can understand how Rashi’s two interpretations are equally valid within *pshat*. Both struggle with the **same** difficulty; that is, the interpretation of “in all your dwelling places” is *exceptional*. According to the first interpretation, the obligation of *chadash* outside Israel is an exception to the rule (also according to *pshat*, as mentioned) that “an obligation associated with land only applies in Israel.” According to the second interpretation, the **meaning** of the phrase, “in all your dwelling places” diverges from its meaning in all other places in Torah (where it means, *in all inhabited places*, even outside Israel).

## 5.

### POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

Since both interpretations are equally valid in explaining the *pshat* of this verse, a seasoned student of Scripture may ask: What is the rationale according to each disputant — according to one, “in all your dwelling places” teaches that *chadash* applies outside Israel, and according to the other, *chadash* applies (only in Israel, but) “after possession and settlement”?

Rashi alludes to an explanation by using the wording, “**the Sages of Israel** (differ concerning this),” and not his usual wording, “our Rabbis (differ concerning this)” (or the like). By doing so, Rashi hints that the {deeper} rationale behind the debate hinges (not on **how to interpret** the simple meaning of the verses (“our Rabbis”) but rather) on two opinions as to how to **understand** and evaluate a Jew’s characteristics and sensibilities {which he alludes to by saying} — “**the Sages of Israel**” (as follows).

The explanation:

Every sacrificial offering was supposed to elicit a specific emotional response in a person, depending on the type of sacrifice. A *chatas*<sup>19</sup> or an *asham*<sup>20</sup> elicited feelings of regret and repentance; a *todah*<sup>21</sup> elicited feelings of appreciation for Hashem, etc. Thus, every offering required a person (not only to offer the physical sacrifice but also), as Rashi writes, to “**direct his heart to Heaven.**”

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<sup>19</sup> {A sin offering, an offering to atone for and purge a sin. A *chatas* could only be offered for unintentional sins committed through carelessness, not for intentional, malicious sins. The size of the offering varied according to the nature of the sin and the financial means of the sinner. Some *chata'os* could not be eaten, but for the most part, for the average person's personal sin, the *kohanim* ate the *chatas*.}

<sup>20</sup> {A guilt offering, an offering to atone for sins of stealing things from the altar, for when a person remained unsure whether he committed a sin or what sin he committed, or for breach of trust. The *kohanim* ate the *asham*.}

<sup>21</sup> {A peace-offering, an offering expressing thanks or gratitude to Hashem for His bounties and mercies. A representative portion of the offering was burnt on the altar, a portion was given to the *kohanim*, and the rest, eaten by the offeror and his family. This category of offerings includes thanksgiving-offerings (in Hebrew, *Todah*, obligatory for survivors of life-threatening crises), free will-offerings, and offerings made after fulfillment of a vow.}

This applied not only to personal sacrifices but even to communal ones. A sacrifice had to evoke an emotional response in every person (as a member of the community) appropriate for the type of sacrifice being offered. [For example, the communal sacrifices that atoned for (the sins of) individuals required each individual to feel regret for his transgression.]

Similarly, in our context: The simple reason for the prohibition against eating *chadash* is that “**the first** of your harvest” had to be brought as an offering (the *omer*). This offering was intended to stir the awareness and feelings in a Jew that “the first” of all that he has must be dedicated to Hashem. And only **afterward**, “you shall eat.”

However, since the *omer* could only be offered from “*k’tzirah* {its harvest},” i.e., the harvest of Israel, it was only able to evoke this recognition in Jews who lived in (places from where the *omer* offering could come —) Israel. We must then clarify: How was this consciousness (that “the first of your harvest” belongs to Hashem) awoken in the Jewish people living **outside** Israel, whose harvest could not be offered as the *omer*?

The “Sages of Israel” present two viewpoints.

The first viewpoint: Those living outside of Israel, also, may not eat *chadash*. Since they were not allowed to eat *chadash* until the day when the *omer* was offered (in Israel), they were thus reminded and inspired to have this above-mentioned recognition (“**the first...**” belongs to Hashem) even though the *omer* did not come from their harvest.

The second viewpoint: **On the contrary!** The way to elicit this emotion in Jews living outside of Israel was **not** by forbidding them from eating *chadash*. Rather, just the opposite! Their recognition that the fields outside of Israel were not under the obligation to have the *omer* taken from them (and as a result, these fields were also not included in the *chadash* prohibition) awakened, in those Jews living outside of Israel, a keen awareness of their lowly spiritual state. (Namely, they were unfit to take part in the *omer* (and as a result, were not bound by the prohibition of *chadash*.) Their appreciation of their **lowly state**



elicited in them a yearning to cultivate the feelings that the *omer* was supposed to arouse, **in an even greater measure** than the feelings aroused in Jewish people living in the land of Israel.

## 6.

### FIRST WORK ON THE ANIMAL SOUL

On this basis, we can also clarify (in light of the inner dimension of Torah) why Rashi begins by presenting the opinion that *chadash* applies outside Israel before presenting the opinion that *chadash* applies only in Israel.

[True, both opinions are **equally valid** within *pshat*; and Rashi presents one interpretation before the other only because he cannot present both simultaneously, as mentioned. Nonetheless, since everything in Torah is precise, there must be some rationale, at least according to the inner dimension of the Torah, for the order in which Rashi presents these two opinions.]

These two approaches affect the Jewish people in two different ways:

According to the first approach, which forbids eating *chadash* {outside of Israel}, the prohibited food concerns a person's body and *nefesh habehamis*,<sup>22</sup> since the restriction against eating a particular food primarily impinges upon (not the person's *neshama*,<sup>23</sup> but rather) his physical body and *nefesh habehamis*.

According to the second approach, Jews {outside of Israel} do not take part in (offering) the *omer* or (the prohibition) of *chadash*. Their exclusion arouses in them a **yearning** to rise higher and to develop the feeling that is aroused {by the *omer*} in the Jewish people living in Israel, and to an even greater measure. This

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<sup>22</sup> {The *animalistic soul* is one of the two souls possessed by every Jew, the other being the G-dly soul. A fundamental element of the animalistic soul is that it desires physicality, and all negative traits are rooted in the *animalistic soul*. The primary objective of a Jew's divine service is to subdue the desires of the *animalistic soul*, to direct its powers for more noble objectives. Ultimately the righteous are given the ability to transform it.}

<sup>23</sup> {*Neshoma*, loosely translated as soul, refers, in this context, to the G-dly soul.}

response primarily affects their G-dly soul. For it is specifically the G-dly soul that can yearn to rise higher (“the spirit of **man ascends on high**”<sup>24</sup>).

On this basis, we can appreciate the order in Rashi’s commentary. The **first** interpretation corresponds to the **first step** in *avodah* that one must take when the body and *nefesh habehamis* are still robust. At the outset, a person must perform certain activities that positively affect his body and *nefesh habehamis*. Only afterward can he progress to the second step, the **second** interpretation — to work on his G-dly soul.

## 7.

### TWO PATHS IN ISRAEL

Rashi’s two interpretations concern not only the land outside Israel (whether or not the prohibition of eating *chadash* applies there), but also concern the land of Israel itself. Did the prohibition against eating *chadash* in Israel begin only after its “possession and settlement” (according to the second interpretation), or did it begin even **before** its “possession and settlement” (according to the first interpretation, which maintains that “in all your dwelling places” comes “to teach that *chadash* applies outside Israel”)?

Based on the explanation offered earlier, we can appreciate how these two approaches are interdependent. The different types of *avodah*, ascribed to the two opinions and paths, as mentioned, apply not only to the Jews of the diaspora but also to the Jews of Israel.

The first opinion (and interpretation) focuses on the *avodah* of refining a Jew’s body and *nefesh habehamis*. Obtaining the recognition, it maintains, that “the first of the harvest” belongs to Hashem was not primarily accomplished by the *omer* (the **offering to Hashem**) but rather by the **prohibition against eating *chadash***, which affects the body and *nefesh habehamis*.

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<sup>24</sup> *Koheles* 3:21.

Therefore, according to this opinion, the prohibition against eating *chadash* began as soon as the Jewish people entered Israel — even before they had settled **permanently** (“possession and settlement”) in the **Holy** Land. For such is the pattern of **holy** conduct relating to the holiness of the **G-dly** soul. This approach to creating the awareness described above (through working with the body and *nefesh habehamis*) is possible even at **the beginning** of a person’s *avodah* (before “possession and settlement”).

However, according to the second opinion — that offering the *omer*, which affected the G-dly soul, was the primary force that brought a Jew to the aforementioned awareness — this can only be accomplished after “possession and settlement.”

Based on a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Emor*, 5737 (1977)