



Sicha Summary

Chelek 17 | Emor | Sichah 2

Rashi's two interpretations of the extent of *Issur Chadash* have similar flaws. The deeper spiritual dispute regarding the best way to touch a Jew outside the Land of Israel.

The Verse:

The *sichah* opens by quoting a verse concerning the prohibition of eating from the new crop until the *omer* offering is brought: “You shall not eat bread... until this very day, until you bring your G-d's sacrifice. This is an eternal statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.” (*Vayikra* 23:14)

The Rashi:

In all your dwelling places — The Sages of Israel differ concerning this. Some learn from here that the prohibition of eating the new crop before offering the omer applies even outside the Land of Israel, while others say that this phrase comes only to teach us that the command regarding the new crop applies only after possession and settlement {i.e., in the Land of Israel only}, after they had conquered and apportioned the Land of Israel.

The Question:

Rashi's first interpretation, that “all your dwelling places” means any place, seems to be closer to the literal meaning of this phrase than his second interpretation, which stretches its meaning to refer to the process of possession and settlement. Yet, by introducing the commentary with the neutral clause, “The Sages of Israel differ,” Rashi suggests that both interpretations are equally suitable according to the plain meaning of the verse.

The Explanation:

Earlier, in his commentary on the prohibition of animal castration, Rashi expresses a general principle that all prohibitions associated with a person's body apply everywhere in the world, while prohibitions associated with the land apply only in the Land of Israel. (*Vayikra* 22:24)

Thus, Rashi's first interpretation, that the prohibition of the new crop applies everywhere, is an exception to this general rule that prohibitions tied to the land apply only in the Land of Israel.

Rashi's second interpretation, which conforms to the aforementioned rule, poses a difficulty in that it departs from the usual understanding of the phrase, "your dwelling places," which clearly means *anywhere a person lives*.

Rashi equates both interpretations because they both have the same weakness: They are exceptions to the general rule.

The Sages' Psychological Insight

An astute reader will ask: If both interpretations have the same weakness, what is the basis of their dispute? Why is one preferable to the other?

To address this, Rashi introduces his commentary with the unusual phrase, "The Sages of Israel differ." Meaning to say, their dispute is not based on scriptural interpretation, but rather, spiritual consequence, debated between "Sages," who are attuned to the spiritual stature of the Jewish people.

The spiritual message behind the prohibition of the new crop is that the first and best of everything belongs to G-d.

The grain used for *Omer* offering, which permits partaking of the new crop, is taken from the Land of Israel. Inhabitants of Israel experience this *mitzvah* intimately, and therefore, they take its lesson to heart. The Sages

were concerned about the Jews in the Diaspora: How would they be able to partake in this *mitzvah* and absorb its spiritual message?

Rashi's first interpretation, that the new crop is also forbidden outside of Israel, allows Jews living outside of Israel to experience a sense of indebtedness to G-d by means of their deprivation.

According to Rashi's second interpretation, that this prohibition only applies within Israel, denying the Jews outside of Israel a tangible experience of the prohibition is meant to elicit a deeper yearning from the Diaspora Jews. Having no concrete way of expressing their indebtedness to G-d, they will pursue this spiritual ideal with even greater devotion.