



לקוטי שיחות  
PROJECT  
LIKKUTEI  
SICHOS

## Sicha Summary

Chelek 17 | Bechukosai | Sichah 1

### The Verse:

“If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them.” (*Vayikra* 26:3)

### The Rashi:

*If you follow My statutes* — I might think that this refers to the fulfillment of the commandments. However, when Scripture says, “and observe My commandments,” the fulfillment of the commandments is already stated. So what is the meaning of, “if you follow My statutes”? It means that you must toil in the study of Torah.

*And observe My commandments* — You shall toil in the study of Torah in order to observe and fulfill the commandments.

### The Questions:

1) How does Rashi know that “follow My statutes” refers to **toiling** in Torah, and not to standard Torah study?

2) Rashi seems to contradict himself in his commentary on this verse. In the first segment he posited that “when Scripture says, *and observe My commandments*,” it refers to “the fulfillment of the commandments.”

Yet in his remarks on the words, “observe My commandments” he says, “You shall toil in the study of Torah **in order** to observe and fulfill the commandments.” Meaning, this phrase does not refer to the fulfillment of the commandments, but rather, it is a clause that clarifies the beginning of

the verse: *You shall toil in Torah so that you can observe the commandments.*

### **The Explanation:**

“Follow My statutes” cannot mean standard Torah study because studying Torah is itself a *mitzvah*, and thus it is included in the phrase, “My commandments,” which refers to all the *mitzvos*. Rather, “follow My statutes” must refer to a qualitatively different form of study that goes beyond the letter of the law — “toil in Torah.”

This, however, creates a problem of sequence in the verse. The general exhortation, “observe My commandments,” should precede the higher, more intense practice of “toiling in Torah.”

To address this, Rashi explains that the second clause does not actually refer to *mitzvah* observance per se, but rather to the intention that should accompany in-depth study — “so that you can observe the commandments.” In this way, the verse’s sequence is intelligible.

### **The Deeper Lesson:**

*The term chukim*, “statutes,” generally refers to those *mitzvos* that are beyond human comprehension; it is also related to the word for “engrave,” — “*chakikah*.” The shared root alludes to the fact that fulfilling the supra-rational *mitzvos* is difficult work, like engraving in a stone, as opposed to writing on a paper.

Here, the Torah intentionally refers to Torah study with a term connoting supra-rational *mitzvos* to teach the following lessons: Even though Torah study is a rational practice, a person must apply himself to it with irrational devotion. Secondly, a person must recall that because Torah is Divine wisdom, it is essentially unknowable. Through toiling in Torah, a person will come to this recognition.