



לקוטי שיחות
PROJECT
LIKKUTEI
SICHOS

Sicha Summary

Chelek 17 | Emor | Sichah 1

The Verse:

In the midst of discussing the festivals, the Torah says, “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day, it is a complete rest day, a holy occasion; you shall not perform any work.” (*Vayikra* 23:3)

The Rashi:

Six days — Why does Shabbat appear here amidst the festivals? To teach you that whoever desecrates the festivals is considered as if he had desecrated the Shabbat, and that whoever fulfills the festivals is considered as if he has fulfilled the Shabbat.

The Questions:

Rashi questions the peculiar placement of the law of Shabbat. Why, then, does he quote the words, “For six days,” and not the more relevant words, “On the seventh day, it is a complete rest”?

A second question: Why does Rashi first formulate his explanation in the negative, “whoever desecrates,” and then in the positive, “whoever fulfills?” Why not follow the order in the verse, which speaks first of the positive, “it is a complete day of rest”?

Explaining Rashi’s Question:

Rashi was not bothered by the Torah mentioning Shabbat in the midst of a discussion about festivals. Shabbat, after all, can be said to be a festival. The difficulty Rashi addresses is based on the introductory words, “Six days you shall work,” which seem out of place. An explicit allowance for weekday work is necessary in the Torah’s first discussion of Shabbat, where we first

learn of the prohibition of labor. But in the passage dealing with the festivals, where Shabbat is mentioned parenthetically, it seems unnecessary.

Rashi's answer, that the intent of this verse is to equate the desecration of festivals to the desecration of Shabbat, is based on his understanding of the term "six days."

The Explanation:

A few verses later, Rashi distinguishes between the term "שבעה ימים," which means seven distinct days, and "שבעת ימים," in which *שבעת* is a noun, referring to a unit of seven days — a week. (*Vayikra* 23:8) The same applies to the "six days" in our verse — it means a period of time that consists of six days.

By saying "Six days you shall work," the Torah divides time into two categories: 1) The six day period where work is permitted; and, 2) all time outside of that period, during which work is prohibited.

It is now understood why the Torah introduces the passage that discusses the festivals with the phrase, "Six days you shall work." With this clause, the Torah establishes that all the days that the Torah is about to discuss, Shabbat and festivals, are part of a unit of time during which work is prohibited.

It follows that Shabbat and the festivals are fundamentally identical concerning the prohibition of labor, since this prohibition arises from their being outside of the "six days" of work.

Thus, Rashi comments on the words "Six days"; both his question and the resolution he offers center on that phrase.

We also understand why Rashi first formulates his equation of Shabbat and the festivals in the negative, for they are explicitly similar regarding the negation of labor. Once this relationship has been established, he can then

venture to say that they are linked in the positive sense as well — “Whoever fulfills the festivals is considered as if he has fulfilled the Sabbath.”

The “Wine of Torah” in Rashi’s Commentary:

The command to work six days, to conform to the demands of the natural world, applies to the body. The soul, however, exists outside the block of “six days,” and is prohibited from engaging in labor. On Shabbat and festivals, when the soul shines in the body, a person must desist from work. Ultimately, the soul should influence the body even within the timeframe of “six days,” so that it is lifted above the constraints and demands of work.