

בס"ד

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Emor

10 Iyar, 5784 – May 18, 2024

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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
Parshas Emor**

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**Rashi in His Own Words**

ויקרא כ"ג, ג': ששית ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי שבת שבתון מקרא קדש כל מלאכה לא תעשו שבת הוא לה' בכל מושבתיכם:

רש"י ד"ה ששת ימים: מה ענין שבת אצל מועדות, ללמדך שכל המחלל את המועדות מעלין עליו כאלו חלל את השבתות. וכל המקיים את המועדות, מעלין עליו כאלו קיים את השבתות:

**Vayikroh 23:3:** (For) six days work may be performed, but on the seventh day, it is a complete rest day, a holy occasion; you may not perform any work. It is Shabbos to the Lord in all of your dwelling places.

**Rashi Heading: (For) six days:** Why does Shabbos appear here among the festivals? To teach you that one who violates the festivals is considered as if he had violated Shabbos, and one who keeps the festivals is regarded as having kept Shabbos.

**Synopsis**

This week's Torah portion, Emor, tells us about each festival<sup>1</sup>. Immediately after discussing the festivals, the Torah pauses to teach us about Shabbos<sup>2</sup>; "(For) six days work may be performed, but on the seventh day, it is a complete rest day, a holy occasion; you may not perform any work. It is Shabbos to Hashem in all of your dwelling places." We know that Rashi is particular about each word he uses, including those that serve as his comments' heading. Here, he is bothered that the commandment of resting on Shabbos is placed together with the commandments regarding keeping the festivals. He clarifies this by asking, "Why does Shabbos appear here among the festivals<sup>3</sup>?" This being the case, we must understand why the heading of his comments is "for six days?" His problem is not regarding the mention of the six weekdays but rather the day of Shabbos! Rashi often follows the words he cites from the verse with "etc." (וגו' in Hebrew) to allude to the end of the verse. However, here, he does no such thing.

1. See our Parshah, Vayikroh 23:4-37.

2. Ibid., Vayikroh 23:3.

3. See Rashi ibid.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Additionally, we need to understand why Rashi begins with the negative, "whoever desecrates the festivals is considered as if he had desecrated Shabbos," rather than the positive, "whoever fulfills the festivals is considered as if he has fulfilled Shabbos."

Peshat is the method by which Rashi explains the Torah. According to Peshat, the fact that Shabbos appears among the festivals is not such a substantial question. As other commentaries say, we can include Shabbos with the holidays, even though it is not one of the "appointed holy days we designate<sup>4</sup>." Nonetheless, we still need to mention it with the holidays to point out the differences between Shabbos and the festivals. Rashi's problem is why the Torah needs to tell us that "for six days, work may be done." The Torah only requires the mention of Shabbos here, not the six weekdays. Rashi explains this by comparing the severity of performing labor on a festival to the seriousness of working on Shabbos.

When the Torah says that "(for) six days labor may be performed," it does not use the word "six" as an adjective, i.e., the number of days during which work may be performed. Instead, as Rashi explains in other places throughout the Torah, "six - שש" is a noun, a unit of time. Rashi explains that the Torah designates two distinct units of time. One measure of time is a weekday, during which one may perform labor. The other is Shabbos and festivals during which one may not work. That explains why Rashi only cites the words from the verse "(for) six days." That is his point that a six-day workweek is one unit of time. That also explains why Rashi begins with the negative. "Whoever desecrates the festivals is considered as if he had desecrated Shabbos." He explains that Shabbos and festivals are a time unit during which one may not perform work.

### **Rashi's Explanation**

This week's Torah portion, Emor, tells us about each festival. Immediately after introducing the discussion of the festivals, the Torah tells us about Shabbos. "(For) six days work may be performed, but on the seventh day, it is a complete rest day, a *שבת שבתון* (a holy occasion) during which you may not perform any work. It is Shabbos to the Lord in all of your dwelling places." The fact that after introducing the laws of the festivals, the Torah interrupts with the commandment of resting on Shabbos seems to bother Rashi. He clarifies this by asking<sup>5</sup>, "Why does Shabbos appear here among the festivals?"

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4. See our Parshah, *ibid.* 23:2, *ibid.* 23:4 and *ibid.* 23:37.

5. As a rule, Rashi does not ask questions; he provides answers which explain potential difficulties.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

### Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

We know that Rashi is particular about all the words he uses, including those that serve as the heading of his comments. Why is the header of his comments "for six days?" His problem is not regarding the mention of the six weekdays. The addition of the day of Shabbos after introducing the festivals bothers him!

Rashi often follows the words he cites from the verse with "etc." (וגו' in Hebrew) to allude to the end of the verse. If he did so here, it would include the words "seventh day." However, here, he does no such thing.

There are exceptions to this rule. Rashi sometimes cites the first few words of a verse without writing, "etc.. Nonetheless, he explains the entire topic. For example, when describing the Ephod, one of the priestly garments, the Torah says,<sup>6</sup> "and they shall make the Ephod of gold, blue, purple, and crimson wool, and twisted fine linen, the work of a master weaver." Rashi cites the words, "and they shall make the ephod," and explains that "If I tried to explain the making of the Ephod and the Choshen according to the order of the verses, their explanation would be fragmentary and the reader would make a mistake in combining them. Therefore, I am writing first how they were made, as it was in its entirety so that the reader will be able to run through it quickly ..." We see that even though Rashi is explaining the entire process of the Ephod, he only cites the words, "and they shall make the Ephod," without even writing, "etc. - וגו'." However, that only applies when the first words of the verse contain at least a part of the entire content Rashi explains. That is not the case with Rashi's comments here.

We also need to understand why Rashi begins with the negative, "whoever *desecrates* the festivals is considered as if he had desecrated Shabbos," rather than the positive, "whoever *fulfills* the festivals is considered as if he has fulfilled Shabbos."

### The Explanation

It may be possible to explain the mention of Shabbos in the following manner. The Torah tells us we may not be more lenient regarding a holiday than Shabbos. There is a fundamental difference between Shabbos and festivals. Hashem created the world in six days, and on the seventh day, He rested (so to speak). Therefore, we must keep Shabbos. Since then, there has been an ongoing cycle of six weekdays followed by Shabbos. In other words, Hashem Himself sanctified the Shabbos.

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6. See Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 28:6 and Rashi's comments there.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

On the other hand, the festivals are blessed by the Jewish nation, meaning by the Sages. The Torah tells us when each festival occurs in the Hebrew month. The Sages decide the day the month begins, specifically the Supreme Jewish Court in Jerusalem, called the Sanhedrin<sup>7</sup>. The Torah mentions Shabbos to teach us that although G-d sanctifies it, and man sanctifies the festivals, we must be equally careful regarding both.

However, this answer does not suffice. When the Torah compares Shabbos to the holidays, it does not speak about desecrating but instead observing both. This shows us that it does not imply any leniency regarding festivals.

Instead, the explanation is as follows. When the Torah says that "(for) six days labor may be performed," it does not use the word "six" as an adjective, the number of days during which work may not be performed. Instead, as Rashi explains in many other places throughout the Torah, "six - שש" is a noun, a unit of time. Rashi gives a similar explanation several verses further<sup>7</sup>. The Torah writes, "And you shall bring a fire offering to the Lord for a seven-day period (שבועת ימים)" Rashi cites the words "for a seven-day period" and explains that "(The Hebrew is שבועת ימים, lit., a "seven" of days.) Wherever the שבועת appears, it denotes a noun, and (thus, the expression here שבועת ימים means) "a week of days"; *septaine* in Old French (which is the noun, as opposed to sept, meaning the number seven). Likewise, every (construct expression like) שלשת, חמשת, ששת, שמונת (literally means, respectively,) "an eight of," "a six of," "a five of," "a three of," (meaning a unit consisting of one of these numbers)<sup>8</sup>.

Rashi explains that the Torah designates two distinct units of time. One unit of time is a weekday, during which one may perform labor; the other is Shabbos and festivals, during which one may not perform work. That explains why Rashi only cites "(for) six days." His very point is that a six-day workweek is one unit of time. That also answers why Rashi begins with the negative, "whoever desecrates the festivals is considered as if he had desecrated Shabbos." He explains that Shabbos and festivals are a time unit during which one may not perform work, instead of a weekday on which one may perform labor.

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7. See Rambam Laws of the Sanctification of the New Moon. "The sanctification of the new month has been entrusted to the Sanhedrin. The new month does not begin until it has been sanctified by the court, and the day that they establish as Rosh Chodesh is Rosh Chodesh."

8. See our Parshah, Vayikroh 23:8 and Rashi's commentary.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

### A Deeper Explanation from Rashi

The Sages tell us in the Midrash that "six days you shall work" is a positive commandment. This means that not only *may* one work on the weekdays, but it is also a *mitzvah* to perform work. This follows the teaching that "Hashem should bless you in all that you do," meaning that you must do something, i.e., work, to provide a vessel to hold G-d's blessing.

However, all of this is regarding the body. The physical body in which Hashem clothes the G-dly soul conceals the Divine manifestation within the world. This is why the laws of nature, with which G-d created the world, must be followed. However, when the Divine soul is revealed on Shabbos and holidays, these laws do not apply.

Since the G-dly soul is higher than the body, its revelation on the holy days influences the body. The soul can elevate the body and bring it out of its natural limits despite the physical body's limitations. The soul will remove the body from exile, and we will merit the actual redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

*(Compiled from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Emor 5734)*

**I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.**

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**Chaim and Aiden Oded** שיהיו

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May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride  
to their family and a Torah light to their community

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Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka** שיהיו

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**Mrs. Esther** שתהי' **Sharabani**  
May she go from strength to strength  
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

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