

# SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 21

*Yisro, Sicha 1*

### The Rashi:

In describing the Jewish people's preparations for the Giving of the Torah at Sinai, the Torah says: "Israel encamped there opposite the mountain."

### Rashi comments:

Israel encamped there — [the Torah uses the singular form of encamped, denoting that they encamped there] as one person with one heart, but all the other encampments were [divided] with complaints and with strife.

### The Questions:

1. In quoting the verse, Rashi includes the word "Israel." Seemingly, this undermines his comment that unusual usage of the singular verb alludes to the Jews being "as one person with one

heart" — because it is not unusual to refer to a nation in the singular!

2. The Torah often employs a verb in the singular when speaking about an entire nation, yet Rashi does not comment on this usage elsewhere; why does he do so here? For example, at the Splitting of the Sea, the Torah says, "And Israel saw (singular tense) the great hand, which G-d had used upon the Egyptians, and the people feared (plural form) G-d, and they believed (plural form) in G-d.... (Shemos 14:31)
3. Earlier in his commentary, Rashi offered a very similar interpretation to the verse describing Pharaoh's pursuit of the Jewish people after their exodus from Egypt: "Pharaoh drew near... the Egyptians were advancing after them." (Shemos 14:10)

Rashi explains: Were advancing after them — [In the Hebrew, the verb "advancing" is in the singular, denoting that they were] with one heart, like one person.

Why does Rashi reverse the order in the following comments: Regarding Egypt, Rashi says, “with one heart, like one person,” and regarding the Jewish people, he says, “like one person, with one heart”?

### The Explanation:

When speaking of an action taken in unison by a nation, the singular form is used, because each person is doing the same action. When speaking of the emotional state or of intellectual comprehension of an entire nation, the plural form is used, because each individual feels and comprehends differently.

When Egypt was pursuing the Jewish people, we would assume that each individual was possessed by varying degrees of hatred for the Jews. Pharaoh and his advisors were certainly more emotionally invested than the simple soldier. Therefore, we would expect the Torah to have used the plural form of “advancing” in the verse, “the Egyptians were advancing after them,” because each person was “advancing after them” according to their own individual mindset.

Rashi, therefore, sees the singular form as an allusion to the fact that the Egyptians were united in their hatred of the Jewish people. “With one heart,” they all possessed an identical emotional reaction. This, in turn, led to the Egyptians forming a

semblance of national unity, “as one person.” Meaning, their unity was not essential, but only as a result of their shared hatred.

Similarly, regarding the Jewish people’s preparation for the Giving of the Torah, we would expect there to have been variation in the people’s level of excitement and inspiration for this event, and therefore, we would expect the Torah to have used the plural form of the verb “and the encamped.”

Rashi therefore comments, “and Israel encamped there — as one person with one heart,” to convey the idea that their essential unity as Jews — “Israel” — was revealed at the foot of the mountain and caused them to be “as one person.” This, in turn, caused them to have an identical emotional anticipation for the Giving of the Torah, “with one heart.”

This explains the inversion in Rashi’s comments: The Egyptians did not share an essential unity; their artificial unity only grew out of a shared hatred of the Jewish people — “with one heart, as one person.” The Jewish people did share an essential unity, which caused them to have a shared emotional experience “as one person, with one heart.”

### The Inner Dimension:

The Giving of the Torah dissolved the barriers between Heaven and Earth.

Therefore, there are now more opportunities for spiritual enlightenment available in this world than before the Giving of the Torah. Even though gentiles do not possess identical souls to one another, and therefore, they do not have easy access to an essential unity, nonetheless, in a post-Sinai world, they can reveal the essential G-dly spark within each person to achieve some semblance of true unity.

This is why gentiles are commanded to observe the Seven Noahide Laws — “because G-d commanded them to do so in the Torah.” The Torah, which is Divine wisdom that transcends human differences, enables the gentiles to touch the limitless Divine spark within each person, and achieve unity with one another.

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