



לקוטי שיחות
PROJECT
LIKKUTEI
SICHOS

Closing Time

Sicha Summary

Chelek 19 | Eikev | Sichah 2

The Verse:

“All of the *mitzvah* that I command you this day you shall keep to do, that you may live and multiply, and come and possess the land that G-d swore to your forefathers.” (*Devarim* 8:1)

The Rashi:

All of the mitzvah — This is to be understood according to its simple meaning [that the verse refers to all the *mitzvos*]. And according to the *Midrash Aggadah* [the verse means, “the whole of the *mitzvah*”]: If you start a *mitzvah*, finish it, because it is attributed only to the one who completes it, as it is said, “And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up from Egypt, they buried in Shechem.” (*Yehoshua* 24:32) But didn't Moshe alone bring them up? However, since he did not complete the *mitzvah* of burying Joseph's bones, and the Jewish people completed this *mitzvah*, it is accredited to their name. (*Tanchuma* 6)

The Question:

What difficulty in the first explanation, which explained the verse according to its simple meaning, led Rashi to offer a midrashic explanation?

The Explanation:

Moshe was addressing the people in the desert, exhorting them to fulfill all of the *mitzvos*, so that they would “possess the land” that G-d promised.

At that stage, prior to entering the land, the Jewish people were not obligated to perform most of the 613 *mitzvos*. In the desert, they were not bound to perform any *mitzvos* related to the land, holidays, or sacrifices.

Why, then, does Moshe say, “all of the *mitzvah*,” when they were only obligated to observe a handful of *mitzvos*?

Rashi’s first explanation clarifies that, indeed, the verse is to be understood literally — “all of the *mitzvah*” here means “every *mitzvah* within a certain category,” namely, those that the people observed in the desert. But this is unsatisfactory because the verse uses the singular, “all of the *mitzvah*,” not the plural “*mitzvos*,” yet still refers to the many *mitzvos* that they kept in the desert.

To satisfy this question, Rashi offers a midrashic interpretation that explains the verse’s singular form as referring to “the entirety of a *mitzvah*.”

Why was it important for Moshe to instruct the Jews to fulfill *mitzvos* in their entirety at that time specifically?

Moshe was encouraging the Jews who were to enter the Land by telling them that even though their ancestors had observed many *mitzvos* throughout their journey, these would be their final *mitzvos* that would complete their mission and usher them into the Land.

Rashi then presents the narrative of Moshe bringing Joseph’s bones to illustrate the following point: Just as Moshe’s failure to complete this *mitzvah* was involuntary, and the Jewish people who completed this *mitzvah* had the opportunity to begin the *mitzvah* together with Moshe but chose not to, still, the *mitzvah* is attributed to the Jewish people. The same applies regarding the Jews entering the Land. Among the generation barred from entering the Land there were individuals who still wanted to enter it,

and among the generation of those who *did* enter the Land there were individuals who did not want to enter — still, even the *mitzvos* of those unwilling individuals were crucial, no matter their intention.

The Lesson:

In this final generation before the coming of Moshiach, it is our *mitzvos* that will usher in the final redemption, even if earlier generations were more worthy.

Additionally, if a person has begun to actively spread the wellsprings of Torah, he cannot leave this task unfinished — he must complete the *mitzvah*.