



לקוטי שיחות  
PROJECT  
LIKKUTEI  
SICHOS

## Everything is Part of the Cure

### Sicha Summary

Chelek 18 | Masei | Sichah 1

#### The Sages:

Why does the Torah enumerate the stations of the Jewish people's forty-year journey through the desert? The *Midrash* offers a parable: "It may be compared to a king whose son was ill; the king took his son to a distant place to cure him. On their return journey, the father began to enumerate all the stages of their journey, saying to his son, "Here we slept, here we caught cold, here you had the headache." Similarly, G-d told Moses, "Count for them all the places where they angered Me." Therefore, the verse says, "These are the journeys of the Children of Israel." (*Midrash Tanchuma, Massei 3*)

#### The Questions:

- a) What are the three parallels between the Jewish people's journeys and the examples in the parable: "Here we **slept**, here we caught **cold**, here you had the **headache**."
- b) Why are the first two examples given in the plural, "we," and the third in the singular, "you"?
- c) In the parable, on their return home, the father reminds the son of what happened when they previously passed the same places. What does the return journey symbolize in the travels of the Jewish people? They only travelled in one direction — toward the Land of Israel!

## **The Basic Explanation:**

The parable alludes to the first three legs of the journey from Egypt to the Sea of Reeds.

- a) First, they departed from Ramsees to Succot, and they spent the night there — “Here you slept.” (*Rashi to Exodus 13:20*)
- b) When they travelled from Succot to Eitam (*Shemos, ibid*) the Clouds of Glory arrived to provide protection and shade from the sun — “Here we caught cold.” (*Ibid, 21. Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim, 625*)
- c) When they left Eitam and arrived at Pi HaCherot, the people complained to Moses: “Leave us alone, and we will serve the Egyptians, because we would rather serve the Egyptians than die in the desert.” (*Shemos 14:12*) This was a rational, yet rebellious thought: “here you had the headache.”

## **The Intentional Descent:**

The journeys of the Jewish people through the inhospitable desert allude to the general descent of the soul into this inhospitable world. The purpose of this descent is for it to lead to a higher ascent. But this deeper purpose is not felt during the moments of darkness and descent themselves. It is only during the ascent, as we pass through the darkness toward the light, that we appreciate how those descents were actually integral to our growth.

Similarly, the “journeys,” the descents, of the Jewish people, were for the purpose of an ascent. But this could only be acknowledged “on their return journey home.” During the ascent itself, G-d was able to show the “son” how each negative experience was actually part of his “cure.”

In order for there to be the possibility of a descent for the sake of an ascent, we must have free choice and room for error. This process is alluded to in the three stages of the parable:

- a) Here we slept — during sleep, all purposeful activity is absent. Divine “sleep” is the act of G-d retreating from the world, leaving room for darkness.
- b) Here we caught cold — at the same time, there must remain a trace of Divine light, enabling positive choice and action. This reintroduction of light can be said to “cool off” the harshness of the absence of the Divine.
- c) Here you had a headache — For choice to be truly free, the ego must be emotionally and intellectually compelling. The animalistic soul’s intellect is “your headache” that makes selfishness seem to be a valid and compelling option.

Thus, the first two are in the plural because G-d experiences His own absence and presence as well. But the third is in the singular because the animal soul’s intellect is relevant only to the “son,” not the father.

### **Rashi’s “Etc.”:**

The utility and value in the descent is understandable as long as we are discussing descents engineered by G-d. Because He caused them, clearly they must have a purpose. But can the same be said for the descents created through our own free choice? Are our own sins also purposeful; are they for the sake of an ascent?

When Rashi cites this *Midrash*, he adds “etc.” after the phrase “here you had a headache.” (*Bamidbar* 33:1) In the parable, the son has some worrisome setbacks but does not actually fall ill. The three journeys these setbacks represent relate to their travels before the Splitting of the Sea, before the Jewish people began to make the choices that condemned them to the desert for forty years. Thus, the parable speaks of descents engineered by G-d.

Rashi, in adding “etc.,” alludes to the fact that even their subsequent journeys, during which the Jews make fatal sins and errors, are also part of the father’s journey to heal his son. They, too, have Divine intent and purpose, and must be part of the larger story of our eventual ascent.