

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 24

Ki Tavo, Sicha 1

The Verse:

Addressing the Jewish people toward the end of his life, Moshe reminds them of the grandeur of G-d's choice of the Jewish people:

"G-d has selected you this day to be His treasured people, as He spoke to you, and so that you shall observe all His commandments, and to make you supreme, above all the nations that He made, [so that you will have] praise, a [distinguished] name and glory; and so that you will be a holy people to your God, as He spoke." (Devarim 26:18-9)

Rash highlights the two phrases which Moshe attributed to an earlier statement by G-d, "as He spoke to you," and provides the source for each:

[G-d has selected you... to be His treasured people] *As He spoke to you:* [When He said]:

"And [out of all the nations,] you shall be to Me a treasure." (Shemos 19:5)

And so that you will be a holy people... as He spoke — [When He said]: "And you shall be holy to Me." (Vayikra 20:26)

The Question:

Rashi provides two different verses from the book of Shemos and Devarim as the source for the two statements in our verse. The source for G-d having selected the people as His "treasure" is from the narrative of the Giving of the Torah, where G-d said "you shall be to Me a treasure. And the source for the phrase "you will be a holy people to your G-d" is from the end of parshas Kedoshim, "you shall be holy to Me."

But the verse from Shemos which says "you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples," is followed directly with a verse that begins "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of princes and a holy nation." Both statements in our verse, "treasured" and "holy", therefore, can be found in the Shemos narrative. Why does Rashi maintain that the verse meant by Moshe when he said "so

that you will be a holy people... as He spoke" is from a much later narrative?

Furthermore, Rashi cites a verse from the end of parshas Kedoshim, while the opening verse of that parshah also contains a direct quote from G-d calling the Jewish people holy, "You shall be holy." (Vayikra 19:2) Why does he cite the later verse and not the earlier reference?

The Explanation:

In the verse speaking of the Jews as a "treasure," Moshe says, "as He spoke to you." In the second verse describing the Jews as "holy," Moshe says "as He spoke."

Previously in his commentary, Rashi explained that the phrase "as He spoke to you" means "concerning you." (Rashi to Bereishis 28:15) In other words, it refers to a statement G-d has made about the subject of the verse, not that G-d is speaking to, or commanding, the subject. The phrase "as He spoke" without the qualifying "to you," refers to a direct command to the subject.

The verse in Shemos, "you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples... and a holy nation," is not a command to the people, but rather, G-d conveying His guarantee that the Jewish people will always be treasured by, and holy to, Him. Therefore, Rashi could not explain that the second verse, "and so that you will be a holy people to your God, as He spoke," referred to the verse in Shemos, because clearly the intention here

is to a command to be holy, not a description of holiness.

The verse from Vayikra, on the other hand, is a command to the Jewish people to behave in a holy manner. More specifically, the verse places this command in the context of the Jewish people's uniqueness relative to other nations: "And you shall be holy to Me... and I have distinguished you from the peoples, to be Mine." The opening of Kedoshim, on the other hand, is an individual command to be holy. Rashi therefore cited the verse from the end of Kedoshim, because it corresponds to the theme of our verse which is also the uniqueness of the Jewish people as a nation, "to make you supreme, above all the nations that He made."

The Deeper Dimension:

The theme of these two verses of G-d's expressions of endearment is that the Jewish people are inherently transcendent from the parameters of this world and are utterly one with G-d. The parable of being G-d's "treasure" illustrates this. The king has treasure that he uses in the service of his kingdom, to build the country, the economy, the army, But he also has private treasures that serve no other purpose than delighting himself. They are not a means to an end, to entertain, impress, or create. They are for him alone.

The Jewish people, this verse suggests, are not a means to an end. They are G-d's private treasure which exists for G-d alone. The second verse makes clear that even

when the Jewish people “descend” to become part of this world, they still maintain their transcendent identity and remain aloof from the materiality of the world. The “holiness” of the second verse refers to this quality, that even while we

partake of the material world in a similar way to other people, we bring a spiritual intention to our physical actions, making them holy, set apart, and sacred from the rest of the world.