



לקוטי שיחות
PROJECT
LIKKUTEI
SICHOS

Sicha Summary

Chelek 19 | Devarim | Sichah 4

The Verse:

May G-d the L-rd of your forefathers add to you a thousandfold as many as you are, and may He bless you, as He spoke concerning you! (*Devarim* 1:11)

The Rashi:

May... add to you a thousandfold as many as you are — What is the purpose of repeating further [in the verse]: “And He will bless you, as He has spoken concerning you?” They [the Israelites] said to him, “Moshe, you are limiting our blessings [i.e., our numbers being multiplied only a thousandfold]. The Holy One, blessed is He, already promised to Avraham (*Bereishis* 13:16), ‘so that if a man will be able to count [the dust of the earth, so will your seed be counted]!’” Moshe replied to them: “This [blessing of a thousandfold] is mine, but He will bless you as He spoke concerning you!”

The Questions:

- 1) If G-d’s blessing is so much more powerful than Moshe’s finite blessing, what purpose does Moshe’s blessing serve?
- 2) The Midrash, commenting on this verse, says that G-d’s “additional” blessing is more valuable than the principal blessing itself. (*Devarim Rabbah*) If G-d’s blessing is so valuable, why is His blessing called “additional” and the other blessing called “principal?” This implies, as in Rashi’s comment, that there is some enduring value in the finite “principal” blessing even considering the infinite nature of G-d’s additional blessing.

The Preface to the Explanation:

The Talmud raises a contradiction between two clauses of one verse:

“And the number of the children of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured and cannot be counted.” (*Hoshea* 2:1) The first clause implies that the Jewish people will have a specific number, though it will be very large. The second clause implies that they cannot be counted at all. How can these two statements be reconciled?

“It is not difficult: Here, it refers to a time when the Jewish people fulfill the will of God. [Then, they cannot be counted.] There, it refers to a time when the Jewish people do not fulfill the will of God. [Then, they will be like the sand of the sea, having a specific number.]” (*Yoma* 22b)

Both blessings, the finite and infinite, are elicited through the divine service of the Jewish people. “Not fulfilling the word of G-d” refers to spiritual work that is lacking the expansiveness and transcendence of the natural self. It is finite, and therefore, it draws down a finite response. “Fulfilling the will of G-d” refers to a type of divine service that transcends the individual’s limitations; this unbridled service draws down an infinite response.

In a loftier sense, *mitzvos* are a finite divine service, as they are bound in number, and prescribed for specific times, places, and people. In contrast, the fervor and longing of repentance is a divine service that is infinite.

The straightforward meaning of the verse from Hoshea, however, is that the “number” of the Jewish people itself is so great that it “cannot be measured or counted.” In the above spiritual terms, this means that a finite Divine service can be infused with the infinite. The *mitzvos* themselves, although they are finite, are capable of touching the infinite will of G-d. Why is it necessary to reach the infinite will of G-d through finite action? Because G-d’s unbound essence is truly expressed when finitude itself is a vehicle for infinity, evincing that He is found both in light (infinite expression) and darkness (finite expression).

The Explanation:

This is why Moshe's finite blessing is crucial even when G-d's infinite blessing is present: The objective of G-d's infinite blessing is for it to be expressed through the Moshe's finite blessing.

Ultimately, though, it is still unclear why G-d's Essence is expressed through finite, human action — couldn't G-d Himself fuse finite and infinite without outsourcing it to fallible humanity? Yet this is G-d's mysterious desire — that all Divine exposure and revelation occur through human action, so that it is earned and not freely given. G-d desires that even the revelation of His Essence be triggered by human action.

This is why even G-d's infinite blessing — the revelation of His Essence — is called “additiona,” while the finite blessings generated by humanity are called the “principal”: It is because finite human actions are the “principal,” the main event, on the stage of G-d's plan for Creation. The finite efforts of humanity are essential to eliciting G-d's infinite blessings.