

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 20

Vayetze, Sicha 2

The Verse:

As Yaakov was leaving the Land of Israel for Charan, he spent the night at Mount Moriah where he experienced his famous vision:

“And behold, G-d was standing over him, and He said, “I am G-d, the G-d of Avraham your father, and the G-d of Yitzchak; the land upon which you lie to you I will give it and to your seed. (*Bereishis 28:13*)

The Rashi:

Upon which you lie — The Holy One, blessed be He, folded the entire Land of Israel under him. He hinted to him that it would be easily conquered by his children.

The Questions:

Rashi’s source is Tractate Chullin, yet he modifies it in some significant ways. The talmud asks: “What is the greatness of this promise,” meaning, what kind of grand promise is there in telling Yaakov he will possess the small parcel of land he is laying on? The Talmud responds, “Rabbi Yitzchak

says: This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, folded up the entirety of Eretz Yisrael and placed it under Jacob, our patriarch, so that it would be easy for his children to conquer.”

Rashi does not include the question in his commentary, implying that it is not an inherent difficulty in the verse. This is further underscored by the fact that Rashi omits the word “the land upon which you lie,” in his introductory citation. If the problem in the verse is that posed by the Talmud, that the land on which Yaakov lies is too small, then Rashi would have highlighted the essential word, “the land.” Because he only cited the phrase, “upon which you lie,” this means that the problem lies in those words themselves.

The Explanation:

The Talmud’s question — that G-d’s promise is insufficient if it applies only to the land beneath Yaakov’s prostrate body — is not relevant to the straightforward meaning of the verse. When G-d says that the land that you are lying on will be yours, we understand that He does not mean the

specific area of land that is beneath you, but rather the entire land. Specifying “upon which you lie” is only referencing which land is under discussion, the Land of Israel.

The difficulty here is why did G-d have to specify at all by saying “upon which you lie”? The verse could have simply said, “this land I will give to your seed.”

To this Rashi offers the talmud’s interpretation of G-d folding the land beneath Yaakov. This was a symbolic act which indicated Yaakov’s ownership of the land, similar to when G-d told Avraham to walk the length and breadth of land to also establish his ownership. The difference is that Avraham’s ownership was established through effort, while Yaakov’s was done passively. The point of this miracle was to

demonstrate that Yaakov’s descendants would be able to conquer the land effortlessly, as if in their sleep.

The Inner Dimension

Chassidus explains that the essence of a person’s soul shines in their immediate surroundings, their four cubits. Thus, Yaakov’s essence illuminated the entire Land of Israel which lay beneath him. As Yaakov’s descendants, we therefore also have this innate connection to the land. The essence of the soul does not acknowledge any opponent, nothing can vanquish the essence. This is why “it would be easy for his children to conquer,” because our essence is tied to the Land of Israel, nothing can truly impede us from claiming it as our own.
