



לקוטי שיחות
PROJECT
LIKKUTEI
SICHOS

Sicha Summary

Chelek 18 | Shelach | Sichah 3

The Context:

After the spies returned from their expedition to the Land of Israel and gave a disappointing, negative report to the people, Calev and Yehoshua attempted to lift the people's spirits and fortify their faith:

“Do not rebel against G-d, and you will not fear the people of that land, for they are our bread. Their shade [protection] is removed from them, and G-d is with us; do not fear them.” (*Bamidbar* 14:9)

The Rashi:

Do not rebel — and consequently, “you will not fear...”

For they are our bread — we will consume them like bread.

Their shade [protection] is removed from them — Their shield and strength — their virtuous ones have died, namely, Job, who protected them [See *Rashi to Sotah* 35a]. Another interpretation: The shade [protection] of G-d has departed from them.

The Explanation:

Rashi's first comment was prompted by the following question: The spies claimed that the inhabitants of Canaan were too powerful to overcome. (*Bamidbar* 13:28) Yet Calev and Yehoshua never explicitly responded to that claim. Why not? Rashi therefore comments: “*Do not rebel* — and consequently, “you will not fear,” meaning, fear is only possible if the people rebel against G-d. If they are faithful to Him, they will have no reason to fear the powerful Cannanites.

Rashi's second comment clarifies the metaphor of bread based on the insight of his first comment: We might have thought that "they are our bread" alludes to the necessity of entering the Land. It is so vital to the Jewish people's identity, like bread, that we must forge ahead and attempt to conquer it.

But because Rashi understands that Calev and Yehoshua were telling the people that if they had faith, they had no reason to fear, it follows that the meaning of "they are as our bread" continues this same thread: "We will consume them like bread." If the people do not rebel, they will have no reason to fear their enemies, because defeating them will be as reasonable as eating bread. The reader recalls that when the Jewish people asked for bread in the desert, G-d provided the manna with grace and love. (*Shemos* 16-7-8) Thus, likening the enemy to bread alludes to the fact that G-d will happily and gracefully lead the Jewish people to victory.

To better understand the meaning of Rashi's third comment, we must first preface with a dispute between Rambam and Raavad concerning the status of an animal slaughtered by an idolater.

The Dispute:

The law states that an animal slaughtered by an idolater is considered *neveilah*, which imparts ritual impurity when carried. Rambam says this rabbinic decree was established due to their negative, idolatrous ways. (*She'ar Avos haTum'ah* 2:10) Raavad disagrees and maintains that an idolater is not recognized as a legal entity capable of an act that legally changes the status of an animal. The reason the animal is considered a *neveilah* is because it is as if the animal died on its own, like a *neveilah*.

In other words, they disagree about the halachic status granted to an idolater. Rambam maintains idolaters are recognized as legal entities; Raavad believes they are non-entities. Consequently, it stands to reason that they also disagree whether or not individual Divine Providence extends to idolaters. According to Rambam, G-d's providence does extend over idolaters; therefore, they are halachically significant. According to Raavad,

G-d's individualized providence does not extend over idolaters;; therefore, they are not recognized as halachic entities.

Unprotected:

Rashi's two interpretations of "their shade [protection] is removed from them" corresponds to these two opinions:

- 1) "Their shield and strength, their virtuous ones have died, namely, Job, who protected them [See *Rashi* to *Sotah* 35a]." According to the opinion that G-d's providence does not apply to idolaters, it is impossible to say their "protection is removed" refers to G-d's protection. Therefore, this opinion maintains that it was the protection of Job that was removed.
- 2) "Another interpretation: The shade [protection] of G-d has departed from them." This aligns with the opinion that G-d's protection does extend over idolaters. Only in this scenario, G-d removed it to allow the Jewish people to conquer the Land of Israel.

Calev and Yehoshua then concluded, "and G-d is with us; do not fear them." "Shade" alludes to a form of protection that is distant and removed. This was the kind of Divine attention afforded to the Cannanites, and even it was removed. But G-d is "with us" closely and intimately. Therefore, "do not fear them."