



לקוטי שיחות
PROJECT
LIKKUTEI
SICHOS

A Chosen and Sacred Place

Sicha Summary

Chelek 19 | Re'eh | Sichah 2

The Verse:

“It shall be that the place where G-d, your L-rd, will choose to rest His Name – there shall you bring everything that I command you.” (*Devarim* 12:11)

The Rambam:

In the Laws of the Chosen House (*Beis Habechirah*), Rambam writes: “The Altar is [to be constructed] in a very precise location, which may never be changed, as it says: “This is the Altar for the burnt offerings of Israel (*Divrei Hayamim II* 22:1).” (*Rambam, Hilchos Beis Habechirah* 2:1)

Rambam continues in the following *halacha*: “It is the place where Abraham built the Altar... Noah built an altar in that place Cain and Abel brought sacrifices there... Adam, the first man, offered a sacrifice there and was created at that very spot.”

The Question:

The verse implies that the sanctity of the place of the Altar derives solely from G-d “choosing” its location. Based on the Rambam, however, it seems that this place is holy because of the historical events that unfolded there, and not because of G-d’s choice: The Altar must be “in a very precise location” because of its acquired sanctity throughout history.

The Explanation:

The Rambam's title for these laws, "Laws of the Chosen House," indicates that Rambam *does* maintain that it was G-d's free choice that sanctified this location.

In the second *halacha*, Rambam clarifies the nature of this choice. There are irrevocable choices, and choices subject to change. G-d "chose" King David and his descendants as kings, but His choice does not preclude there being legitimate Kings from other tribes. (*Rambam, Laws of Kings, 1:7*) Was G-d's choice of the Altar's location irrevocable or subject to change?

From the fact that Abraham, Noah, Cain, Abel, and Adam offered sacrifices there, it is evident that the choice of this location was set in stone. Otherwise, they could have offered sacrifices in some other location that was also fitting for G-d to choose.

Thus, the first *halacha* establishes that this location was exact. And the second *halacha* provides support for this assertion.

The Inner Dimension:

Holiness and chosenness have different strengths and limitations. Holiness is earned through one's actions and internal work — it becomes part of the person. But it is limited according to the person's spiritual abilities. Chosenness is unlimited, for it comes from G-d without restriction. However, it does not fuse with the chosen entity; it remains abstract.

The Rambam emphasized that both of these advantages were present in the *Beis Hamikdash*: It was chosen by G-d, and this choice was fully present and integrated with the *Beis Hamikdash*. The choice became part of its own "holiness."