

# SICHA SUMMARY

## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 28

*Pinchas, Sicha 1*

### The Context:

In his enumeration of the 613 Mitzvos, the Rambam places the following mitzvah as the final one: “To render judgment in questions regarding inheritances as it states: “If a person dies without having a son [you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter] (Bamidbar 27:8)” (*Rambam, Enumeration of Mitzvos*)

The Rambam’s sequencing in his work is intentional. If he placed the mitzvah of inheritance as last, it must be because it expresses the culmination of the entire project of the mitzvos.

We find a similar theme in the Mishnah which concludes with the teaching, “In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will **bequeath** to each righteous person three hundred and ten worlds, for it is written: “That I may cause those that love me to **inherit** substance (*yesh*, the numerical value of 310).”

Here, too, the theme of inheritance emerges as the final reward for the righteous person's mitzvah observance. What is the significance of inheritance in the context of one’s relationship with G-d forged through mitzvos?

### The Preface to the Explanation:

The laws of inheritance in the Torah follow the narrative of Tzelafchad’s daughters who desired to inherit their father’s portion in the Land of Israel. In the wake of the confusion surrounding the law of a father who died without sons, the Torah introduces the laws of inheritance, “If a person dies without having a son you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter.”

Implied is that the idea of inheritance is somehow tied to the Land of Israel specifically.

The Torah uses three concepts to describe how the Land of Israel was distributed.

1. The land was divided pragmatically, based on tribal size, “To the large [tribe] you shall give a larger inheritance and to a smaller tribe you shall give a smaller inheritance, each person shall be given

an inheritance according to his number.”  
(Bamidbar 26:54)

2. The specific plots of land were divided amongst the families of each tribe using a lottery, a device that transcends reason — “Only through lot shall the Land be apportioned” (Ibid 26:55)
3. The land is also called an inheritance, “I have given this [land] to you as an inheritance.” (Shemos 6:8)

The Land of Israel is inherently Divine, and its connection to the Jewish people is an expression of their connection with G-d and their Divine mission in the world. Thus, the three ways we come to take possession of the land alludes to three dimensions in the Jewish people’s relationship with G-d. This is seen explicitly in our daily prayer when we say, “How fortunate are we, how good is our **portion**, how pleasant is our **lot**, and how beautiful is our **inheritance**.” These forms of connection are listed in ascending order, and so the question becomes, a) what are these three levels of relationship with G-d, and; b) why is inheritance the deepest of them?

### The Explanation:

The logical division of the land commensurate with the tribe’s size can be compared to a sale. The purchaser gives payment according to the value of the merchandise, and receives the item in exchange. In terms of our relationship with G-d, this alludes to a reciprocal exchange: we serve G-d according to the best of our ability, and G-d rewards us commensurate with that effort.

A lottery is like a gift. A gift does not reflect the efforts of the recipient, it transcends the logic of a sale. In terms of our relationship with G-d, a lottery alludes to G-d’s innate connection with the Jewish people regardless of our Divine service. In this dimension, we receive beneficence from G-d that transcends our limited efforts.

Dispute the deep affinity between the giver and the recipient, however, a gift still presupposes a distinction between the giver and the recipient; they remain two distinct beings. Inheritance operates differently. When the child inherits the parents, the law sees it as if the child assumes the identity of the parent, and therefore takes possession of the parent’s assets. It is not a transfer from one entity (the parent) to another (the child). The child literally stands in the place of the parent.

In terms of our relationship with G-d, inheritance alludes to the deepest truth — that we are literally one with G-d, in the way that a child is synonymous with the parent he inherits.

These three dimensions in our relationship with G-d developed over three periods in Jewish history: 1) prior to the Giving of the Torah the Jewish people approached G-d using their own limited human effort; 2) at the Giving of the Torah G-d chose the Jewish people, revealing His innate connection with us that transcends our efforts and gifting us with His essence in the form of the Torah and its mitzvos; 3) the Messianic Era where the essential identity

of the Jewish people will be manifest — that we are inseparably one with G-d Himself.

This is why the Rambam concludes the listing of the mitzvos with the laws of inheritance, because they allude to the deepest form of connection to G-d — that through our mitzvos it is revealed how we are literally one essence with G-d Himself. This also explains a curious omission. In the verse Rambam cites, he only includes the

first half of the verse, “If a person dies without having a son,” without the essential part of the verse, “you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter.” In doing so, he alludes to this deepest truth: In this level of essential identification, G-d does not “have a son,” the distinctions between parent and child, a bifurcated relationship, dissolves. All there is one, undifferentiated G-d/Jew existence.

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