



לקוטי שיחות
PROJECT
LIKKUTEI
SICHOS

Sicha Summary

Chelek 19 | Nitzavim | Sichah 2

The Verse:

Not with you alone do I forge this covenant and this oath, but with whoever is here, standing with us today before G-d, and with whoever is not with us today. (*Devarim* 29:13-14)

The Rashi:

And with whoever is not here — also with future generations.

The Questions:

- 1) What novelty does Rashi add by explaining that “whoever is not here” refers to future generations? Moshe was addressing an assembly of “all of you (*Ibid.* 29:9),” every Jew alive at the time. Obviously, then, “whoever is not here” means those in the future.
- 2) Why doesn’t Rashi address the more fundamental question: How does one forge a covenant with people who have not yet come into existence? Other commentators explain that the souls of all future Jews were present, or that “a son is a limb of his father.” (*Shach, ad loc.*) Why didn’t Rashi offer a similar explanation?

The Explanation:

Rashi did not feel compelled to explain how G-d could forge a covenant with people not yet in existence because, quite simply, **G-d** was making the covenant. G-d is not constrained by the limitations of time, and can freely choose to create a bond between Himself and those Jews who would live in future generations.

What Rashi does explain is the **form** the covenant took with “future generations.” The verse’s wording “not with you alone do I forge this covenant... but with whoever is here... and with whoever is not with us...” implies that the covenant that was made with those present was the same exact covenant made with those who were not present (i.e., future generations). G-d made a covenant directly with each and every Jew, alive or not.

This is different from saying that G-d formed a covenant with future generations by having their souls present, or by means of each of them being a “limb of his father.” According to these explanations, the covenant with Jews who would live in the future would not be the same as the covenant with the Jews in the desert at the time the covenant was made. Only the souls, not the bodies, of future Jews would have been united in this covenant with G-d. Or, the covenant would have applied to them by means of an extension from earlier generations. It would not have been made with later generations individually.

Rashi, therefore, omits these explanations and says, “**and also** with future generations.” Meaning, the covenant G-d made with those present was the same exact covenant, “and also,” as with the generations who were not yet in existence.

The Lesson:

Though at times we may feel that our actions are insignificant because we are a tiny minority in the world, we feel this way only if we view ourselves as isolated individuals. In truth, when we uphold G-d’s covenant by observing Torah and *mitzvos*, we unite with all Jews from all previous generations, forming an invisible link with all Jews, stretching back to the generation that entered the Land of Israel. We have no reason to fear, for when we are united we will surely be meritorious in the judgment of Rosh Hashanah.