

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Lech Lecho

11 Cheshvan, 5779 – October 20, 2018

Compiled from the works of
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Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Lech Lecho

Likkutei Sichos Volume 20, Pages 45 – 53

Rashi in His Own Words

בראשית ט"ו, א': אַתָּר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְּבַר־הַיְיָ אֶל־אַבְרָם בְּמַתְנֵהוּ לֵאמֹר אֶל־תִּירָא אַבְרָם אֲנִכִּי מִגֵּן לֵךְ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד

רש"י ד"ה אחר הדברים האלה: כל מקום שנאמר אחר סמוך, אחרי מופלג. אחר שנעשה לו נס זה שהרג את המלכים והיה דואג ואומר שמא קבלתי שכר על כל צדקותי, לכך אמר לו המקום אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך מן העונש שלא תענש על כל אותן נפשות שהרגת, ומה שאתה דואג על קבול שכרך, שכרך הרבה מאד:

Bereishis 15:1: After these incidents, the word of the Lord came to Avrom in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Avrom; I am your Shield; your reward is exceedingly great."

Rashi Heading – After these incidents: Wherever the term אחר (*achar*) is used, it signifies immediately afterwards; אַחֲרָי (*achirai*) signifies a long time afterwards. After this miracle had been wrought for him, that he slew the kings, he was worried and said, "Perhaps I have received reward for all my righteous deeds." Therefore, the Omnipresent said to him, "Fear not Avrom, I am your Shield" from punishment. You will not be punished for all those souls that you have slain, and as far as your being worried about receiving reward, your reward is exceedingly great.

Synopsis

In this Torah portion, Lech Lecho, we are told that Avrom miraculously won a battle in order to save his nephew, Lot. "After these incidents, the word of the Lord came to Avrom in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Avrom; I am your Shield; your reward is exceedingly great¹.'" Rashi explains that despite the great miracles which G-d had performed for him, his reward is exceedingly great. He therefore has no need to worry that G-d would no longer protect him.

The Rambam says explicitly that Avrom's service of Hashem was totally out of love. He had no thought whatsoever of Divine reward, protection or anything else. This being the case, why would he worry? We might explain that, granted, Avrom was not motivated to serve

1. Our Parshah, Bereishis 15:1.

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G-d in order to receive any reward. Nevertheless, if he had used up his reward it would be a sign that his Divine service was not complete.

However, were that the case, Hashem would have told him something to the effect of, "Fear not, Avrom; your service of Me is complete, regardless of whether you have used up your reward!" The fact that G-d told him that his reward is great, demonstrates that He did not mean reward for the sake of something else.

The explanation is that, that Avrom's service of Hashem was purely because of his love for Him. He was not at all concerned about receiving reward. However, the fact that Hashem told him that his reward is *exceedingly great* expresses the greatness of his Divine service. His great reward meant nothing to him for *his* sake. His only concern was using this great reward for *G-d's* sake. It did not contradict his selfless service of Hashem; rather it was an integral part of it.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Lech Lecho, we are told that Avrom miraculously won a battle in which he killed many kings in order to save his nephew Lot. "After this incident, the word of the Lord came to Avrom in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Avrom; I am your Shield; your reward is exceedingly great².'" Why would Avrom be afraid? Rashi explains this in the following manner. "After this miracle had taken place for him, that he slew the kings, he was worried and said, 'Perhaps I have received reward for all my righteous deeds.' Therefore, Hashem said to him, 'Fear not Avrom, I am your Shield' from punishment, that you will not be punished for all those souls that you have slain, and as far as your being worried about receiving reward, your reward is exceedingly great." In other words, despite the great miracles G-d had performed for him, his reward is nonetheless exceedingly great.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

The Rambam says explicitly that Avrom served Hashem totally out of love. He had no thought whatsoever of a heavenly reward. He writes that³ "one who serves Hashem out of love

2. See Footnote 1.

3. Rambam, Laws of Teshuvah, Chapter 10 Section 2. See also his Commentary to the Mishnah, Tractate Sanhedrin, Chapter Chelek in the introduction. See as well his Book of Commandments, Positive Commandment Number 3.

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... he is occupied with Torah and Mitzvos ... neither due to any ulterior motive ... nor to inherit that which is good. He performs that which is good simply because it is good. This is an extremely lofty level. It is the level of our *forefather Avrohom*, who served G-d purely out of love." This being the case, why would he worry about having *used up his merit*?

We might explain that, granted, Avrom was not motivated to serve G-d for the sake of any reward. Nevertheless, if he had used up his reward it would be a sign that his Divine service was not complete.

However, if that was the case, Hashem would have told him something to the effect of, "Fear not, Avrom; your service of Me is complete!" From the fact that G-d told him that his reward is great, it seems clear that he was concerned with the actual reward itself.

The Explanation

In general, there are two different types of serving Hashem for an ulterior motive. The first is serving Him while expecting the reward which He gives. It is a reward which comes directly from G-d. This reward one *automatically receives*. The reward is a sort of cause and effect. The consequence of one's positive actions is positive, i.e. a reward. The second is that one studies Torah and performs Mitzvos in order to enable himself to *take* reward. He strives to become a teacher of Torah or a rabbinic authority. As a result of his exalted stature, he can support himself, while sitting in a position of honor. This is reward which one *takes for one's self* from Torah.

Neither of the two is proper. However, the second sort of ulterior motive is obviously far lower than the first. In fact, this sort of behavior is prohibited. The Mishnah tells us⁴ not to use the Torah as a "crown with which to magnify one's self, or as a spade with which to dig."

The only circumstance whereby the Torah permits using Torah study as a "spade with which to dig." Namely, provided that he is doing so in order to make a living. The reason is quite simple. One is obligated to support his family. However, using Torah in order to attain wealth, especially attaining wealth from other people as a result of his status as a great rabbi and scholar, is certainly prohibited.

Contrast this with the service of Avrom. He had no concern whatsoever with his own status or reward. His sole concern was that as a result of his reward he would be able to continue

4. Pirkei Avos Chapter 4, Mishnah 5.

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spreading Hashem's name throughout the world.

He was not at all concerned about receiving any reward in and of itself. However, the fact that Hashem told him that his reward is not just great, but *exceedingly great* expresses the lofty level of his Divine service. He had no interest in the great reward for himself, for *his* sake. His only concern was using this great reward for *G-d's* sake. It did not contradict his selfless service of Hashem; rather it was an integral part of his Divine service.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

The Sages teach us that⁵ "as a result of learning Torah for an ulterior motive, one will come to learn Torah for its own sake⁶." One might take this phrase to mean, that as a result of becoming accustomed to studying Torah and performing Mitzvos, it can become second nature. Once that takes place, the person will begin fulfilling Mitzvos regularly, and for the proper reasons.

However, here we are saying something deeper. Hidden within the action of learning Torah for ulterior motives, there exists level of learning Torah for pure motives. It's much more than merely becoming accustomed to Torah study and Mitzvah performance.

We then have a level which is yet deeper. There are many aspects of a person. The body wishes to study in order to be respected as a great sage, and to accumulate wealth. However, the body without the soul is nothing. Within the Torah study of the body, is the Torah study of the soul. That study is purely for the sake of G-d.

The actions of our forefathers, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, serve as a sign for us, their descendants sign. But their actions are not merely a *sign*. Their actions give us the ability to accomplish the same things which they did. Avrom was able to serve Hashem totally out of love without any additional motives. We have all inherited this ability from him. At times it may seem difficult, yet we need to keep in mind that the "inside" of the actions which I perform, are permeated with this ability.

5. See Sanhedrin 106, a.

6. The Hebrew expression is מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה. It is an expression which cannot be properly translated into English. The simple meaning which the Hebrew implies is as a result of performing an act for an ulterior motive, one will eventually perform it selflessly. However, the Hebrew word מתוך actually means "from the midst of." As will be explained inside, the deeper meaning is that within the action which was performed for improper motives, there is a pure action (albeit concealed).

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The very verse we are discussing, tells us that Avrom's reward was *exceedingly great*. Yet despite such great reward, it made no difference to him. He did not take that into consideration. He was fully prepared to do whatever it took to serve Hashem, with or without reward. The reward was irrelevant. As mentioned above, we inherit our abilities from our forefathers. We are all the recipients of great rewards. May we all use our ability to serve G-d under any and all circumstances. Through this we will certainly merit the complete and true redemption now.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecho, 5741)

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**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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**IN HONOR OF
Chaim and Aiden Oded שיקחי Morris**

*

**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיקחי Morris**

* * *

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER
Mrs. Brocha bas Reb Tzvi Nechemiah Hacoheh ע"ה Cohen
Passed away on 8 Shevat, 5778
May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Mr. Sholom Moshe Hacoheh ben Tzivia ש"י Cohen
For a complete and speedy recovery**

* * *

**DEDICATED BY
Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar ש"י Mars**

*

May he merit to be a Chossid, a Yerei Shomayim and a Lamdon

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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לעילוי נשמת

מרת ברכה בת ר' צבי נתמי' הכהן ע"ה כהן

נפטרה ביום ח' שבט, ה'תשע"ח

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

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לזכות

ר' שלום משה הכהן בן צבי' שי' כהן

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

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נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מאריס

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יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן