בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Lech Lecho

13 Cheshvan, 5787 – October 24, 2026

Compiled from the works of
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The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by
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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': אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם בַּמַּחֲזֶה לֵאמֹר אַל־תִּירָא אַבְרָם אָנֹכִי מָגֵן לָךְ 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 afterward; אַחֲרֵי (acharai) signifies a long time afterward. After this miracle was wrought for him, that he slew the kings, he 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 you are 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 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 great.[1] Rashi explains that despite the great miracles which G-d had performed for him, his reward is exceedingly great. He therefore need not worry that G-d would no longer protect him.

The Rambam explicitly says that Avrom's service of Hashem was entirely out of love. He had no thought whatsoever of Divine reward, protection, or anything else. Given that, why would he worry? We might explain that, granted, Avrom was not motivated to serve G-d to receive any reward. Nevertheless, if he had used up his reward, it would have been a sign that his Divine service was not complete.

1. Our Parshah, Bereishis 15:1.

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 his reward is great shows He did not mean a reward for something else.

The explanation is that Avrom's service to Hashem was purely out of love for Him. He was not at all concerned about receiving reward. However, Hashem telling 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, killing many kings 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 great. \[2].'" Why would Avrom be afraid? Rashi explains this as follows. "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 explicitly says that Avrom served Hashem entirely out of love. He had no thought whatsoever of a heavenly reward. He writes that [3] "one who serves Hashem out of love … he is occupied with Torah and Mitzvos … neither due to any ulterior motive … nor to inherit that which is good. He does good simply because it is good. This is an extremely lofty level. It

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.

is the level of our *forefather Avrohom*, who served G-d purely out of love." With that in mind, why would he worry about having *used up his merit*?

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

However, if that were the case, Hashem would have told him something to the effect of, "Fear not, Avrom; your service of Me is complete!" Since G-d told him his reward is great, he seems concerned with the 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. This reward 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 to earn reward. He strives to become a Torah teacher or a rabbinic authority. Because of his exalted stature, he can support himself while sitting in a position of honor. This is a reward one takes for *oneself* 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 us [4] not to use the Torah as a "crown with which to magnify oneself, 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" is, namely, provided that he is doing so to make a living. The reason is quite simple. One is obligated to support his family. However, using Torah 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 Avrom's service. He had no concern whatsoever with his own status or reward. His sole concern was that, through his reward, he would be able to continue spreading Hashem's name throughout the world.

He was not at all concerned about the reward itself. However, the fact that Hashem told

4. Pirkei Avos Chapter 4, Mishnah 5.

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 that [5] "as a result of learning Torah for an ulterior motive, one will come to learn Torah for its own sake." [6] One might take this phrase to mean that, as a result of becoming accustomed to studying Torah and performing Mitzvos, it becomes second nature. Once that happens, the person will begin fulfilling Mitzvos regularly, and for the right reasons.

However, we are saying something deeper here. Hidden within learning Torah for ulterior motives is a 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 deeper level. A person has many aspects. The body wishes to study 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. But their actions are not merely a *sign*. Their actions enable us to accomplish the same things 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 I perform is permeated with this ability.

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 consider that. He was fully prepared to do whatever it took to serve Hashem, with or without reward. The reward was

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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).

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 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)

I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

Click here to dedicate a week, a month, or a year to the Rashi of the Week.

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DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
DR. MINDEL RIVKA (MURIEL) BAS REB **MENACHEM MENDEL SHLOMO ע"ה STITT**
PASSED AWAY ON SHABBAT PARSHAT LECH LECHA, 10 MAR-CHESHVAN, 5782
MAY HER SOUL BE BOUND IN THE ETERNAL BOND OF LIFE

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שיחיו

* * *

IN HONOR OF
The Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"
Chaim, **Aiden Oded**, **Zachariah Matan,** and **Noach Ariel שיחיו Morris**
May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem Mendel** and **Chaya Mushka שיחיו Morris**

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IN HONOR OF
Mr. and Mrs. **Ari Netanel** and **Rachel שיחיו Laric**
Mr. and Mrs. **Eliezer Baruch** and **Chaya שיחיו Sollins**

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Mr. & Mrs. **Yosef** and **Miriam שיחיו Goldstein**

* * *

IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther שתחי Sharabani**
May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

*

DEDICATED BY HER SON
Mr. **Gershon (Geri) שי' Bentov**

מוקדש לזכות

כ''ק אדמו''ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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לעילוי נשמת

מרת **מינדל רבקה** בת ר' **מנחם מענדל שלמה** ע"ה **סתית**

נפטרה ש''ק פרשת לך לך יו''ד מר-חשון תשפ''ב

*

נדפס ע''י בני משפחתה שיחיו

***

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חיילי "צבאות השם"

חיים, **עדן עודד**, **זכרי' מתן**, **ונח אריאל** 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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