

## Pasuk 28

Pasuk 28 looks like it is part of the sin. However, if it is part of the sin, why is placed after the punishment in 26-27 and not before it?

Many Rishonim have dealt with this questions and their answers are very interesting. They all use the same strategy which is to explain that this pasuk is actually part of the punishment.

### 1. אונקלוס

ותפלחון תמן לעממיא פלחי טעותא עובד ידי אנשא אעא ואבנא דלא חזן ולא שמעין ולא אכלין ולא מריחין:

### רש"י דברים פרק ד

ועבדתם שם אלהים - כתרגומו. משאתם עובדים לעובדיהם כאלו אתם עובדים להם:

There you will serve gods – [The proper explanation is] like the translation [of Onkelos]. Since you are serving their [the idols'] worshipers, it is as if you are worshipping them [the idols].

### 2. רמב"ן

ועבדתם שם אלהים - משאתם עובדים לעובדיהם אתם עובדים להם, לשון רש"י. וכבר פירשתי סודו כי היושב בחוצה לארץ כאלו עובד עבודה זרה,

There you will serve gods – Since you are serving their worshipers it is as if you are worshipping them” – these are words of Rashi. But I have already explained its secret that one who dwells outside of Israel it is as if he worships idolatry.

### 3. Abarbanel

As a result of their terrible sufferings, many Jews (so Holy Writ foretells) will be brought to forced conversion, worshipping idols but knowing full well that they are made of wood and stone. Their idolatry will be committed just to escape death... It is not mentioned here as a part of their sin but as the punishment for their misdeeds. This would constitute the climax of their sufferings – to be inwardly aware of the true faith and have to pay lip service to idols...

The phrase “from thence (משם) you will seek” goes back to the previous statement: “And there (שם) you shall serve gods.” While in that situation of worshipping other gods, in the midst of those sufferings and persecution, you shall seek the Lord and still remain loyal to Him. He reassured them that they would find Him: “if they would seek Him with all their heart and soul”. How appropriate is that phrase: “With all you heart and soul!” Those Marranos (forced apostates) are unable to practice the observances of Judaism. Indeed their seeking of God can be in their hearts and souls alone!

Exercise: For each of these three Rishonim, try to summarize in one sentence how each deals with seeming misplacement of pasuk 28.