

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Vayechi

16 Teves, 5777 – January 14, 2017

Compiled from the works of

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THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Vayechi

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Rashi in His Own Words

בראשית מ"ט, א' - ב': ויקרא יעקב אל בניו ויאמר האסף ואגידה לכם את אשר יקרא אתכם באחרית הימים: הקבצו ושמעו בני יעקב ושמעו אל ישראל אביכם:

רש"י ד"ה ואגידה לכם: בקש לגלות את הקץ ונסתלקה שכינה ממנו והתחיל אומר דברים אחרים:

Bereishis 49:1-2: Ya'akov called for his sons and said, "Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you at the end of days. Gather and listen, sons of Ya'akov, and listen to Yisroel, your father.

Rashi Heading - and I will tell you: He attempted to reveal the End, but the Shechinah withdrew from him. So he began to say other things.

A Brief Synopsis

In this week's portion, Vayechi, we are told of the passing of Ya'akov. Prior to his passing he told his children to gather together, and he will tell them what will happen at the end of days. He then says in the following verse that they should gather and listen to his words. After this, he proceeds to bless his children, and to tell them, prophetically, various things which would occur to their descendants in the future.

Rashi cites the words of the first verse "and I will tell you," and explains that "he attempted to reveal the time of the Messianic revelation, but Hashem's presence withdrew from him. So he began to say other things." Why does Rashi, who is explaining Peshat, not explain that it refers to the prophetic words which their father immediately told them regarding their individual tribes? Why must he say that "the end of days" literally means the End, the end of days as we know them?

The explanation is, that there are three Hebrew words for verbally relating something to someone else. One is "*Dibbur* - דיבור - speech." Another is "*Amirah* - אמירה - saying." The third is "*Haggadah* - הגדה - telling." Despite the obvious similarity between these three words, they are not exactly synonymous. The first, *Dibbur*, meaning speech, refers to saying something merely with one's mouth. It is quite possible that he does not believe in or agree with that which he is saying. The second, *Amirah* or saying, is saying that which he believes superficially, but does not truly believe with all of his heart. *Haggadah*, or telling, is called by the holy Zohar "words of wisdom." It refers to words which come from the depths of one's heart.

Here, Ya'akov prophetically told his children "האסף ואגידה לכם - gather and I will tell you," using the word "*Haggadah*." This tells us that he wished to impart to them the deepest secret. That is the time of the

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ultimate Redemption. At that time the innermost, most concealed part of the soul will be connected with the innermost part of Hashem through the innermost part of the Torah.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Vayechi, the Torah tells of the passing of our forefather Ya'akov. Prior to his passing, the Torah tells us that¹ "Ya'akov called for his sons and said, 'Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you at the end of days. Gather and listen, sons of Ya'akov, and listen to Yisroel, your father.'" Rashi comments on the words "and I will tell you," that "He attempted to reveal the End, but the Shechinah withdrew from him. So he began to say other things." Immediately thereafter he prophetically describes to his children things which will befall their descendants, the tribes of Israel, in the future. He also blesses them.

Rashi is explaining Peshat. According to the simple explanation of the verse, what reason is there to say that he wanted to tell them the time of the End, the Messianic Redemption? Perhaps all that he wanted to say was that which he actually *did* tell them?

There are supercommentaries² who say that Rashi's proof is from the expression "the end of days." We find this expression used throughout the Bible referring to the End, the ultimate redemption^{3 4}.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

This explanation seems to have a number of difficulties. First of all, while it is true that the expression "the end of days" often refers to the End, we do find instances where this is not true. For example, Bilaam said⁵ "... I will advise you what this nation will do to your people at the end of days." Rashi explains that this refers to the time of King David⁶. Secondly, even if this does refer to the End, why must Rashi say that Ya'akov intended to reveal its time? Regarding the exact time of the ultimate redemption Hashem says, as so to speak, that⁷ "I have kept My intentions in My Heart, and not revealed them to My Mouth." In other words, this means to say that Hashem has not revealed the time of the End. Perhaps Ya'akov simply wanted to tell his children events which would occur at that time, i.e. at the time of the ultimate redemption. We see from Rashi further on

1. Bereishis 49:1-2.

2. See the commentaries of both the Gur Aryeh, who was the Maharal of Prague, and the Sifsei Chachomim to this verse.

3. See, for example, Devorim 4:30, Yeshaya 2:2 and Yirmiyahu 22:20.

4. This is an addition by the translator, which is not mentioned in the Rebbe's talk. The Maharal also adds to this, that by "the end of days" we should not think that Ya'akov meant to reveal the end of the Egyptian exile rather than the End. We know that the Egyptian exile would last for 210 years. At this point the Jewish people, Ya'akov's children had been in Egypt for 17 years. Hence there were 193 years remaining. An average life span at the time was over 100 years; the Torah would not refer to 193 years as "the end of days."

5. Bamidbar 24:14.

6. *ibid.* 24:17.

7. See Yalkut Shimoni Section 507. See also Sanhedrin 99, a and Koheles Rabbah Chapter 12, 10.

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in the Parshah that he did indeed reveal future events. Finally, we need to understand why Rashi feels compelled to explain it in *this* manner according to the simple explanation.

The Explanation

The explanation is as follows. In the first verse which we cited⁸, the Torah says that “Ya’akov called for his sons and said, ‘Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you at the end of days.’” In other words, he asked his children to gather together. In the second verse, he once again told them “Gather and listen, sons of Ya’akov, and listen to Yisroel, your father.” He gathered them a second time. Yet he did not say a thing between the first and second verses. He only began speaking to them after the second time that he gathered them together. Each “gathering” was for the purpose of telling them something. What he told them must have been related to the second time that he got them together. Why doesn’t the Torah tell us what he told them the first time he gathered them? It must be that he intended to tell them something, but was prevented from doing so. Therefore Rashi says that Ya’akov tried to reveal the End to his children. However, he was prevented from doing so because the Shechinah withdrew from him. That was why Ya’akov gathered them again, and began talking about other things.

We know that Ya’akov wanted to say something, but could not do so. The question is why Rashi says that it was specifically the End that he wished to reveal? It could just as easily have been events that would take place at the time of the End that he wished to, and actually did reveal.

The Hebrew language is unlike any other. It is called the “Holy Tongue⁹.” It contains no true synonyms; rather each word has a different shade of meaning. There are three Hebrew words which convey verbally relating something to someone else. One is “*Dibbur* - דיבור - speech.” Another is “*Amirah* - אמירה - saying.” The third is “*Haggadah* - הגדה - telling.” The distinction between these three words is explained both in the holy Zohar¹⁰, and in Chassidic philosophy¹¹. The first, *Dibbur* or speech, refers to saying something merely with one’s mouth. It is quite possible that he does not believe in or agree with that which he is saying. The second, *Amirah* or saying, is saying that which he believes superficially, but does not truly believe with all of his heart. We can see an example of this from a law stated by the Rambam¹². There are times that a Jewish person will say

8. Bereishis 49:1.

9. This is an addition made by the translator, and not a part of the original talk of the Rebbe. The Ramban writes (Shemos 30:13) that "As I see it, the reason for the Rabbis calling the language of the Torah the Holy Tongue is that the words of the Torah and of the prophecies and all sacred utterances were all spoken in that language; it is the language that the Holy One, blessed be He, speaks with His prophets and with His people, saying, "I am ...," "You shall not have ..." and the remaining commandments and prophecies; it is the language by which He is called in His sacred names... and in which He created His universe, gave names to heaven and earth and all therein ..."

10. See Zohar Section 1, Page 236, b.

11. See the Chassidic discourse of the Rebbe Maharash beginning with the words *Nachamu* from 5626 (1866), and that beginning with the words *Mahaichan Zachu* from the year 5627 (1867).

12. See his Laws of Divorce at the end of Chapter 2.

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something which is contrary to the Torah. Likewise, he may refrain from saying something which the Torah obligates him to say. The only reason for this is because, in the words of our Sages¹³, “the eyes see and (as a result of this) the heart desires.” His “evil inclination” is coercing him either to speak or to remain silent contrary to G-d’s command. However, in his inner-most heart he desires to fulfill Hashem’s command. *Haggadah*, or telling, is called by the holy Zohar “words of wisdom.” This refers to words which come from the depths of one’s heart.

The same is true regarding the Holy One blessed be He, as so to speak. When the Torah uses the word *Haggadah*, it means to convey that He is drawing down His deepest, innermost secrets. Therefore, the Sages tell us¹⁴ regarding *Aggadah*¹⁵, “Would you like to recognize Hashem? Learn *Aggadah*! You will thereby recognize the Holy One, blessed be He ...” The reason for this is that in *Aggadah*, which expresses the innermost part of the Torah, the innermost aspect of Hashem is revealed.

Here, Ya’akov told his children “הִתְקַבְּצוּ וְאֶתְּנֶה לָכֶם – gather and I will tell you.” He used the word “*Haggadah*,” which itself tells us that he wished to impart to them the most hidden, deepest secret. That is namely the time of the ultimate Redemption. At that time the innermost, most concealed part of the soul will be connected with the innermost part of Hashem through the innermost part of the Torah.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

From this we can learn an important lesson in our service of Hashem. The generations following the giving of the Torah have declined. There are those who (mistakenly) think that as a result of this, our “orphaned generation” cannot possibly receive the revelations of the future redemption. How could it happen when earlier, greater generations did not attain this?

We can learn the answer to this from our Rashi. The Sages tell us that¹⁶ “the actions of the Patriarchs provide a message to their children.” However, they actually provide us with much more than a message. The deeds performed by Avrohom, Yitzchok and Ya’akov provide us with the ability to perform the same actions which they did. Through this that Ya’akov “attempted to reveal the End,” he gave this power to all of his children at all times. Even a generation from which “the Shechinah withdrew,” a generation such as ours with incomparable concealment of G-d’s presence and total (spiritual) darkness, has the ability to reveal the End. In the mere blink of an eye, we are capable of bringing the complete and true redemption.

13. See Rashi’s commentary to Bamidbar 15:39.

14. See the Sifri to Devorim 11:22.

15. *Aggadah* refers to the stories of the Talmud. This word is derived from the word *Haggadah*, meaning “telling.”

16. See the Ramban’s commentary to Bereishis 12:10.

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The very fact that there are those who claim that our generation does not deserve etc. is the greatest sign that now is the time for the revelation of Moshiach. The Sages tell us that¹⁷ “Moshiach will come when we are distracted.” The fact that we are in a generation in which there are those who say that there is no logical way that Moshiach can come for us, is the true distraction. It is the true sign that the redemption is so close.

The meaning of the above saying of the Sages is not, G-d forbid that we need to be distracted from the coming of Moshiach. To the contrary; it is a fundamental principle of our faith that we must await his coming every day. Rather the meaning is that despite the fact that the arrival of Moshiach does not logically appear imminent, nonetheless we fervently wait for his coming each and every moment of each and every day.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayechi, 5725)

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<http://www.rebbeteachesrashi.org/contact-us-dedicate-an-issue>

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17. See Talmud Sanhedrin 97, a.

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Chaim and Aiden Oded שיחיו **Morris**

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka**

שיחיו **Morris**

* * *

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Mr. **Sholom Dovid** ben Reb **Yitzchak** Hacoheh ע"ה

Mankes

Passed away on 11 Teves, 5776

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

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Mankes

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and **Shoshana Devorah Hodya** bas **Tovah Sarah** ש"ת

For a complete and speedy recovery

*

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* * *

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* * *

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Yisroel Hacoheh ben **Berocho** ש"י

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* * *

IN HONOR OF

Berocho bas **Soroh** ש"ת

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

* * *

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו

מאריס

*

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי'

מושקא שיחיו מאריס

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

ר' שלום דוד בן ר' יצחק הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום י"א טבת ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

לעילוי נשמת

ר' יואל בן ר' שלום דוד הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום כ"ח ניסן ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

לזכות

ר' שמשון בן חסיבה שי'

ר' יוסף יצחק בן שרה שי'

ושושנה דבורה הודי' בת טובה שרה שתחי'

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

*

נדפס ע"י משפחתם

ר' יונתן איציק הכהן

וזוגתו מרת שיינדל מרים שיחיו מנקס

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

ר' חיים יצחק בן ר' יחיאל

משה ע"ה האנטווערקער

נפטר ביום כ"ה אדר שני, ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בנו וכלתו

ר' יואב וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו

האנטווערקער

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

מרת סימא אלכסנדרה בת ר' אידל

ישעי' ע"ה איגעל

נפטרה ביום כ"ג חשון, ה'תשע"ב

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בנה

הת' שמואל שי' איגעל

* * *

נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

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יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן