

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Vayigash

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Compiled from the works of
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by
Rabbi Shmuel Mendelsohn

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

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Rashi in His Own Words

בראשית מ"ז, י"ז: וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת מִקְנֵיהֶם אֶל יוֹסֵף וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם יוֹסֵף לֶחֶם בְּפִסְוִסִים וּבְמִקְנֵה הַצֹּאן וּבְמִקְנֵה הַבְּקָר וּבְחֲמֹרִים וַיְנַהֵלם בְּלֶחֶם בְּכָל מִקְנֵיהֶם בְּשָׁנָה הַהוּא:

רש"י ד"ה וינהלם: כמו וינהגם, ודומה לו (ישעיה נ"א, י"ח) אין מנהל לה, (תהלים כ"ג, ב') על מי מנוחות ינהלני:

Bereishis 47:17: So they brought their livestock to Yosef, and Yosef gave them food (in return) for the horses and for the livestock in flocks and in cattle and in donkeys. He provided them with food (in return) for all their livestock in that year.

Rashi Heading - and he provided them: (The Hebrew וַיְנַהֵלם is) similar to וַיְנַהֵגם, and he guided them. It is also similar to¹ "She has no guide (מְנַהֵל),“ and² "He leads me (יְנַהֵלְנִי) beside still waters.”

A Brief Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Vayigash, the Torah tells us that during the seven years of famine, Yosef provided all of the people with food. The Torah uses the expression, "וינהלם and he led them (meaning provided them), with food." Rashi cites the words "וינהלם and he led them," and explains that it is similar to the word "וינהגם." He cites two proof texts for this. He says that it is similar to the verse "She has no guide (מְנַהֵל)" in Yeshaya, and to "He leads me (יְנַהֵלְנִי) beside still waters" in Tehillim.

Rashi is quite difficult to understand. The verb וינהלם was used earlier in the Torah, and Rashi did not explain it. Does the beginning student require a translation of this word or not? Furthermore, Rashi does not say that וינהגם is the translation of וינהלם. He also does not say that it means the same as the word used in both proof texts. He says that it is similar to them. This implies that it is not a literal translation.

The explanation is, that Rashi wrote his commentary in Hebrew for beginning students. These students are already familiar with the word וינהלם, and Rashi has no need to translate it. However, Rashi is explaining the context in which the word is used here. First our verse says that, "Yosef gave them food ..." It then says that "he led them with bread." These words cannot mean that he gave them food; the Torah would not repeat itself in the same verse. Rather, Rashi is explaining to us that here the word is similar to וינהגם. We find this word used in the Bible to refer to leading, in the sense of taking care of all of one's needs. That is what Rashi demonstrates by his proof texts. Rashi is explaining that the words "and he led them with bread" means that he took care of all of the needs of the distribution of the

1. Yeshaya 51:18.

2. Tehillim 23:2.

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bread. He distributed the food in such a manner that it would last throughout all of the years of hunger.

Rashi's Explanation

In the end of this week's Torah Portion, Vayigash, we find that Yosef sold food to all of the Egyptians throughout the seven years of famine. Due to the total lack of food (aside from that which was in the royal coffers), there came a point that the Egyptians ran out of money. Being that there was no other option, Yosef accepted their livestock as payment for food, as it says³ "They brought their livestock to Yosef ... and he provided them (led them - וינהלם) with food in exchange for all of their livestock in that year."

Rashi cites the word from the verse "וינהלם – and he lead them," and says that "(this word is) like the word 'וינהגם – and he led them.' This is similar to the word 'She has no guide (מנהל, meaning no one to lead her),' and 'He leads me beside still waters.'"

Looking at Rashi superficially, it seems that Rashi is defining the word וינהלם which is used here. It is not a particularly common word. Therefore, Rashi cites two other examples from the Tanach where this word is used to mean "and he led them," in order to serve as proof to his translation.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

We find that the same word, וינהלם, is used earlier in the Torah, albeit in a different form. After Aisov's encounter with Yaakov, Aisov expressed an interest to travel together with his brother. To this Yaakov responded that⁴ "... the children are tender, the flocks and the cattle depend on me ... I will move (אתנהלה - I will lead my entourage) at my slow pace ..." The verb used there, by Yaakov, "I will lead," is the same as that which is used here in our verse. Yet there Rashi does not define the word! If the beginning student is not yet familiar with the word, Rashi should have defined it the first time that it was used in the Torah. Why does he wait until now to translate it. If, however, the beginner does understand the word why does Rashi find a need to translate it here?

We also need to understand why Rashi finds it necessary to cite two proofs for the meaning of our verb "to lead?" We know that Rashi is very precise and only cites that which is needed to explain the meaning of the verse to the beginning student. If one proof is sufficient, why would he cite two?

Additionally, why does Rashi cite his first proof from Yeshaya Chapter 51? The same word appears earlier in the book of Yeshaya. It says⁵ "... and by the springs of water He will guide them (ינהלם)." Rashi generally brings a proof from the first instance that a word is used. Aside from that, we have two additional reasons that Rashi should have used the earlier verse. The earlier word in Yeshaya is in the same form as the word in our portion. The earlier verse in Yeshaya which Rashi does not cite says, ינהלם, "He will guide them," exactly as the verb is used in our verse. The verse which Rashi does cite, however, uses the form of מנהל, meaning "one who guides."

3. Bereishis 34:17.

4. Bereishis 33:13–14.

5. Yeshaya 49:10.

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Furthermore, the verse in Yeshaya which Rashi does not cite, uses the word in the positive – “He will guide them.” The same is true of our verse. However, the verse from Yeshaya which Rashi does cite uses the word with a negative connotation, “she has no guide.”

Rashi is translating the word in our verse “וינהלם.” He is telling us that the word means “וינהגם.” This being the case why, does he say that “it is *like* the word ‘וינהגם – and he led them.’ He should say that “וינהלם” means “וינהגם.”

The same can be asked regarding the two proof texts which Rashi cites. Why does Rashi say that “*it is similar*” to the words in the examples, rather than saying that the words have the same meaning?

The above difficulties seem to imply that the examples which Rashi cites, where the word וינהלם is used (in one form or another), are not totally *identical* to the word וינהלם as it is used here. It is merely *similar* to the word which is being used in our verse.

The Explanation

Rashi wrote his commentary in the Hebrew language for all students, including complete beginners. This means that the study of his commentary assumes knowledge of common Hebrew words. Therefore, he has no need to translate the word used earlier, “אתנהלה – I will lead (myself, the children and the cattle).” Even a total beginner understands the meaning of the word. The verb אתנהלה, from the root word נהל means leading, just as the root word נהג does. The beginning student understands this perfectly.

However, in our Torah portion we encounter a difficulty. Based on the knowledge of the beginner, it would be difficult to explain “- וינהלם בלחם - he led them with food.” What is the meaning of leading one with food? Onkelus, the Aramaic translation of the Torah which is closest to Peshat, translates the words as meaning “and he fed them food.” Rashi, however, cannot explain it in that manner. Earlier in the very same verse it says “and Yosef gave them food in exchange for the horses ...” According to pure Peshat, which is Rashi’s style of explanation, the verse already told us that Yosef gave them food. The Torah would not repeat the same thing twice within the same verse.

Therefore, Rashi says that the word וינהלם is *like* the word וינהגם. The two words are similar, but not synonymous. When Rashi says “*like* וינהגם” he is actually bringing a proof from the way the word is being used in the Tanach – Bible. There is only one place in the entire Bible where this word is used in exactly this form. By citing this word, he is explaining how the Torah is using this word here, and why it can be used in conjunction with food.

In the Book of Tehillim it says⁶ “He caused His people to travel like sheep, He led them - וינהגם as a flock in the wilderness.” The word וינהגם (he led them) does not just mean that he took them by the hand and led them. It means that he took care of their every need. A shepherd does not merely lead his flock in a wilderness, but rather he is devoted to them. The shepherd makes sure that each sheep’s needs are met in the most suitable way.

6. Tehillim 78:52.

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The same is true here. After the Torah told us⁷ that “the money was depleted from the land of Egypt ... and Yosef gave them food ...” it says that the manner in which he distributed the food was "וינהלם" he provided them with food ... in that year.” He did not merely give them food. He distributed the food in a specific manner, calculating and dividing the food so that it should last for an entire year.

Since Rashi is explaining the verb ניהול in a specific manner, rather than just physically leading, he cites other places in Tanach where the verb is used in the same way. Therefore he cites the example from Yeshaya “she has no guide,” meaning that she has no one to lead her. Since the pronoun “she” is referring to the Jewish nation, it obviously refers to something more than taking us by the hand and leading us; rather it refers to guidance. It means governing a nation; taking care of them. That also explains why Rashi does not cite the earlier instance of the word in Yeshaya (as we asked above) or any of the other examples of the verb ניהול being used in Tanach. In all of those instances it can mean taking one by the hand and physically guiding him.

However, in a manner of speaking “she has no guide” is not enough of a proof to make Rashi’s point. In as much as the Torah is discussing a nation, it does not literally mean physically leading one in a certain direction. Nonetheless, it can mean figuratively leading a nation along a certain path. That is why Rashi also brings a second proof text from Tehillim, “He leads me beside still waters.” Hashem is leading us in the sense of providing us with drink, which fits perfectly with our verse. However, we see from the outset of this verse, “Hashem is my Shepherd, I shall lack nothing,” that it is meant allegorically. As an allegory, we can also explain that “leading me beside still waters” can mean leading in the simplest sense of the word.

Therefore, only by using both examples can we see that the word ניהול can mean leading a nation with all of its needs, and providing them with food and drink.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

It says in our Torah portion⁸ “Yosef gathered all of the silver⁹ which was found in the land of Mitzraim ... and Yosef brought the silver to Pharaoh’s palace,” the Alter Rebbe explains in Torah Ohr¹⁰ that there are two general categories of love of G-d. There is one sort of love which is borne of intellect. Contemplating and meditating on the greatness of Hashem, gives birth to, creates, a feeling of love toward Him in my heart. The second sort of love is a natural love which is concealed within the heart of each and every Jew. It stems from the Divine soul of every Jew, which is naturally drawn toward Hashem, its source. However, as previously mentioned, although this is a pre-existing love, it is hidden. It takes an impetus to reveal it.

The physical world which we observe is derived from the Divine, spiritual world. Just as there are these two

7. Bereishis 47:15–17.

8. Bereishis 47:14.

9. The Hebrew word for silver is כסף. This word also has the meaning of craving or longing. It therefore also has the connotation of love.

10. Bereishis 44, b.

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types of love, so too are there two types of grain. There is grain which is planted. This is related to the love of G-d which we plant. We form this love within ourselves as a result of our work; our mental stimulation. The other sort of grain is an after growth, grain which seems to grow on its own. It grows from seeds which fell upon the earth earlier. This sort of grain is related to the natural, hidden love of Hashem. It was previously planted within the soul.

Who is the one that plants this hidden love within Jewish souls? Yosef the Supernal Tzaddik – Saint. His spiritual level is referred to in Kabbalistic terms as “the Gardener of the Supernal Garden.” Yosef plants and draws down spiritual light within the Garden, which is the source of Jewish souls.

This is the spiritual meaning of “Yosef gathered all of the silver ... and he brought it ... to Pharaoh’s palace.” Silver, which is the spiritual level of loving, yearning and longing for Hashem is drawn down to Yosef; he subsequently brings it down to the Divine attribute of Malchus, Sovereignty which is the source of all Jewish souls.

Rashi is alluding to all of this when he says “וינהלם – and he led them, (this word is) like the word ‘וינהגם.’ This is similar to the word, ‘She has no guide (מנהל, meaning no one to lead her)’ “

The meaning of the two verbs used here, הנהיגה and הנהלה, are seemingly the same, leading. However there is a difference between the two. הנהיגה literally means leading someone by the hand, remaining close to the one who is being led. הנהלה on the other hand means conducting someone’s affairs, affairs of state or the like. In other words it refers to leading from a distance. On a deeper level Rashi compares the two words to inform us that despite the fact that it may seem as if my natural feeling of love for G-d has “sprouted” on its own, in actuality it is rooted in a primordial light.

The revelation of this light is from a force which is totally above creation. Therefore the person is not aware of its source. It was not “planted” now; rather it was planted earlier by the spiritual level of Yosef. The individual was led “along peaceful waters.” There are many after growths along the shore. However, the only way to reveal this innate love of Hashem is by contemplation in His greatness. This is in keeping with the Alter Rebbe explanation of the saying of the Sages¹¹, “When wine enters (an individual), (his) secrets exit.” The secret, hidden love of the soul for G-d is revealed by wine, meaning the “Wine of Torah,” i.e. the mysteries of the Torah.

So too, as a result of studying the mysteries of the Torah should all of the secrets and mysteries be revealed; the ultimate secret of the coming of our redemption. This is in keeping with the promise made by Moshiach himself to the Baal Shem Tov, that when the Baal Shem Tov’s fountains will be spread forth to the outside the ultimate redemption will arrive.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayigash 5736)

**For questions, subscriptions or dedications our email address is shmuel@rebbeachesrashi.org.
You can find us on the web at www.RebbeTeachesRashi.org.**

11. Talmud Eiruvin 65, a.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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

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

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Sholom Moshe Hacohen ben Tzivia של Cohen
For a complete and speedy recovery**

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**IN HONOR OF
Berocho bas Soroh שתחילי Cohen
For a complete and speedy recovery**

* * *

**DEDICATED BY
Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar של Mars**

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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

נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן