בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Ha'azinu

Compiled from the works of
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi

Parshas Ha'azinu

Likkutei Sichos Volume 29, Pages 195 – 202

Rashi in His Own Words

דברים ל"ב, מ"ד: וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה־הַזֹּאת בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם הִוא וְהוֹשֵׁעַ בִּן־נֽוּן׃

רש"י ד"ה הוא והושע בן נון: שבת של דיוגי היתה, נטלה רשות מזה ונתנה לזה, העמיד לו משה מתורגמן ליהושע, שיהא דורש בחייו, כדי שלא יאמרו ישראל בחיי רבך לא היה לך להרים ראש. ולמה קוראו כאן הושע, לומר שלא זחה דעתו עליו, שאף על פי שנתנה לו גדולה, השפיל עצמו כאשר מתחלתו׃

Devorim 31:44: And Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song[1] into the ears of the people; he and Hoshea the son of Nun.

Rashi Heading - he and Hoshea, the son of Nun: It was a Shabbos with two leaders (because the office was being transferred to Yehoshua). Authority was taken from one and given to the other[2]. Moshe appointed a "*meturgeman*[3]" for Yehoshua to expound the Torah in Moshe's lifetime. This was so the Jews would not say to Yehoshua, "During your teacher's lifetime, you did not dare to raise your head![4]" And why does Scripture here call him Hoshea[5]? It is to imply that Yehoshua did not become haughty. Although he achieved high status, he humbled himself as at the beginning when he was still called Hoshea[6].

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Ha'azinu, the Torah tells us that[7] "Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song[8] into the ears of the people; he and Hoshea, the son of Nun." Until then, Moshe was the teacher, and all of Israel were his students. On this day, the last day of Moshe's life, he and Yehoshua (referred to as Hoshea, his original name) both taught.

Why was this so? Rashi explains that "It was a Shabbos which had two leaders (because Hashem transferred the leadership to Yehoshua). Authority was taken from one and given to the other. Moshe appointed a "*meturgeman*" for Yehoshua so that he could expound the Torah in Moshe's lifetime. This was so the Jews

1. The Song of Ha'azinu which was just concluded; our Parshah, Devorim 32:1-43.
2. Talmud Sotah, 13, b.
3. Meturgeman literally means a translator. Hear, as in common Talmudic language, it refers to a spokesman who relayed the teacher's words to the public.
4. Sifrei 31:1.
5. His name had been changed to Yehoshua forty years earlier. See Parshas Shelach, Bamidbar 13:16.
6. See the Sifrei on our Parshah, 32:44.
7. Our Parshah, Devorim 32:44.
8. See footnote 1.

would not say to Yehoshua, "During your teacher's lifetime, you did not dare to raise your head!" And why does Scripture here call him Hoshea? It is to imply that Yehoshua did not become haughty. Despite being given high status, he humbled himself as he was at the beginning (when he was still called Hoshea).

Rashi always explains the simple meaning of the text. Even when he cites a Midrash or a Gemorah, his explanation fits squarely with Peshat. Here, not only is he quoting one teaching of the Sages, he is combining three separate, disparate teachings and combining them as one. Why does Rashi find this necessary?

The explanation is that Rashi explains the reason for this unique situation. Generally, the sun sets, meaning that the ruling of one leader concludes, and *then* the sun rises, i.e., the new leader takes his place. Yehoshua would become the new ruler. However, in our verse, Moshe, "he and Hoshea the son of Nun," taught the nation together. Rashi is explaining why this was the case. Yehoshua was the perfect student. He was humble and devoted to his teacher, Moshe. Had Moshe not appointed him to teach with him, the nation would not have accepted him as a leader. It is by quoting these three Midrashim that Rashi brings out this point.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Ha'azinu, begins with a song[9]. Hashem calls the heavens and the earth, which are eternal, to serve as witnesses to the Jewish Nation's behavior. Immediately after this song, Hashem says[10], "Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song into the ears of the people; he and Hoshea, the son of Nun."

Why does the Torah tell us that Moshe and Yehoshua (formerly Hoshea) taught the Torah to the Jews? Rashi explains that this was the last day of Moshe's life. Had Yehoshua not taught in Moshe's presence, he would not have been accepted as Moshe's successor. He indeed had "huge shoes to fill."

Therefore, on this day, there were two leaders, both of whom expounded the Torah. Not only that, but Moshe himself appointed a *meturgeman* to convey Yehoshua's teachings to the public. Rashi concludes by telling us that even though Hoshea had been known as Yehoshua for many years, the Torah refers to him by his original name here. This teaches us that although he reached greatness and was the only one Hashem chose to take Moshe's place, he remained humble Hoshea.

9. Our Parshah, 32:1.
10. Our Parshah, Devorim 32:44.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Rashi's commentary serves the purpose of teaching us Peshat, the simple meaning of the Torah. He repeatedly writes that "my sole intention is to explain Peshat[11]." He sometimes cites the Sages' teachings from the Talmud or the Midrash. However, his explanation fits with the simple meaning of the verse.

In our case, however, we find something most unusual. Rashi's comments here consist of quotations from not one but three different Midrashic sources. Furthermore, each of the three is a comment on another verse.

The beginning of Rashi, that "It was a Shabbos which had two leaders," is a Gemorah in Sotah (see footnote 2). Rashi's words that Moshe appointed a *meturgeman* for Yehoshua are from the Midrash of Parshas Vayelech (see footnote 4). Rashi's concluding comments explain why Moshe's student is called Hoshea from a Midrash on our Parshah (see footnote 6).

Furthermore, the content of the first two sources quoted by Rashi is the same. Each explains that permission was granted to Yehoshua to take over as the teacher and leader of the Jews. However, the third Midrash, which Rashi quotes, appears unrelated. It explains why the verse refers to Yehoshua by an old name. Although it does not appear to be related to his first two statements, Rashi introduces it with the conjunction "and," which indicates that they are connected.

The Explanation

When we learn our Parshah, we immediately face a question. Why does the Torah tell us that Moshe came together with Yehoshua? "Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song into the ears of the people; he and Hoshea, the son of Nun.?" We know that Yehoshua never left Moshe's side; as the Torah writes[12], "his attendant, Yehoshua the son of Nun, a lad, would never depart from his (Moshe's) tent." This being the case, it is evident that Yehoshua was present with Moshe. Why does the Torah specify this here? It does not tell us that Yehoshua was present. Instead, it teaches us that when "Moshe came and spoke," he was not speaking alone. He talked to Yehoshua, "He and Hoshea, the son of Nun."

In other words, when the Torah tells us that Moshe recited the song of Ha'azinu, it adds that it was not *just* Moshe. Instead, it was "he and Hoshea the son of Nun." The word "he" is seemingly redundant. It teaches us here that he, i.e., Moshe and Yehoshua, spoke together as equals.

Rashi is telling us that this was indeed the case here. Rashi begins by notifying us that it was a "Shabbos of two leaders." Each generation has only one leader; as Rashi says elsewhere[13], "There can only be one leader

11. See for example Parshas Bereishis, Bereishis 3:8, ibid. 3:24, and ibid. 8:6.
12. Parshas Tiso, Shemos 33:11.
13. Parshas Vayelech, Devorim 31:7.

for a generation, and not two." How was it possible for both Moshe and Yehoshua to rule simultaneously? Moshe had to *appoint* Yehoshua as his successor. However, how could they both lead at the same time? First, the sun sets, i.e., the leadership of one leader sets, and then the sun rises. How is it possible to have a "Shabbos of *two* leaders?"

Rashi teaches that this was indeed the case by quoting the above Gemorah. The Talmud uses the unusual word "דיוזגי – Diyuzgi." This word is a contraction of the two words "דו – two" and "זוג – pair." In other words, Rashi clarifies that they were two leaders simultaneously.

Rashi also continued by saying that Moshe appointed a *meturgeman* for Yehoshua. Addressing the nation through a *meturgeman* was a sign of leadership. Hence, they both needed to speak in the same manner[14], with an interpreter.

Why was the transition from Moshe's leadership to Yehoshua's different from all others? Why was it necessary for both to teach and lead the people at the same time? To explain this, Rashi adds that Moshe appointed the *meturgeman* "so that he (Yehoshua) could expound the Torah in Moshe's lifetime. This was so the Jews would not say to Yehoshua, "During your teacher's lifetime, you did not dare to raise your head."

Throughout Moshe's lifetime, Yehoshua's conduct was one of total subjugation. He did not conduct himself as a leader in any manner; he was a dedicated student who never left his teacher's side. That is why[15] "his attendant, Yehoshua the son of Nun, *a lad*, would never depart from (Moshe's) tent." Because of this, the people would have looked at him more as a student than a teacher had Moshe himself not made it clear that he was to be their teacher.

Rashi then clarifies that despite his ascent to greatness, "he humbled himself as he was at the beginning (when he was still called Hoshea)."

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

Whoever merits a leadership position receives Divine assistance to help him carry out his mission. Hashem never gives one a job that he is incapable of handling. Leading the Jewish People is undoubtedly a most challenging task, as we saw throughout Moshe's forty years of leadership in the wilderness. Together with the position comes the Divine power, which aids one in handling it.

The same is true of every Jew. We were all chosen for a tremendous position: to transform this physical world into Hashem's dwelling place. Due to this exalted position and the Divine aid we attain to help us carry it

14. This also helps to explain the use of the word "דיוזגי – Diyuzgi." Moshe and Yehoshua were one pair, not two. However, Moshe and his interpreter were one pair, as were Yehoshua and his.

15. Parshas Tiso, Shemos 33:11. Please note that at this time, when Yehoshua was called a lad, he was fifty-six years old.

out, one may believe that he truly deserves his post due to his merit. This may cause a feeling of arrogance. Nonetheless, we must all learn from Yehoshua that we must always retain the necessary humility no matter our position.

The new year, which we just began, should be sweet in a revealed manner. We should merit the ultimate blessing of Moshiach Now!

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu 5731 and 5743)

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

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