

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Vayigash

4 Teves, 5785 – January 4, 2025

Compiled from the works of
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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 לֶחֶם בְּסוּסִים וּבְמִקְנֵה הַצֹּאן וּבְמִקְנֵה הַבְּקָר וּבְחֲמֹרִים וַיְנַהֲלֵם 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 וַיְנַהֲלֵם is) similar to וַיְנַהֲגֵם, and he guided them. It is also similar to¹ "She has no guide (מְנַהֵל) "and² "He leads me (יְנַהֲלֵנִי) beside still waters."

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Vayigash, the Torah tells us that Yosef provided all people with food during the seven years of famine. 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 from the verse "She has no guide (מְנַהֵל) " in Yeshaya, and "He leads me (יְנַהֲלֵנִי) 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 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 does not need to translate it. However, Rashi explains the context in which the Torah uses the term here. First, our verse says that "Yosef gave them food ..." It then says that "he led them with bread." These words cannot mean he gave them food; the Torah would not repeat itself in the same verse. Instead, Rashi is explaining to us that here, the word is similar to וינהגם. This word is used in the Bible to refer to leading caring for all one's needs. That is what Rashi demonstrates by his proof texts. Rashi explains that the words "and he led them with bread" mean that he took care of all of the needs of the distribution of the bread. He distributed the food to last throughout all of the years of hunger.

1. Yeshaya 51:18.
2. Tehillim 23:2.

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Rashi's Explanation

At the end of this week's Torah Portion, Vayigash, we find that Yosef sold food to all Egyptians throughout the seven years of famine. The Egyptians ran out of money, and the populous had no food. Being that there was no other option, Yosef accepted their livestock as payment for food, as it says, ³ "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 led them" and says that "(this word is) like the word 'וינהגם – and he led them.' This is similar to the words '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 here, and it is not a particularly common word. Therefore, Rashi cites two other examples from Tanach where this word means "and he led them" to prove 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 in traveling 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 by Yaakov, "I will lead," is the same as that used here in our verse. Yet there, Rashi does not define the word! If the beginning student is unfamiliar with the term, Rashi should have explained it the first time the Torah used it. Why has he been waiting until now to translate it? If the beginner understands the word, why does Rashi need to translate it here?

We must also understand why Rashi must cite two proofs to explain the verse to the beginning student. If one is sufficient, why would he mention two?

Additionally, why does Rashi cite his first proof from Yeshaya Chapter 51? The same word appears earlier in the book of Yeshaya, where it says, ⁵ "... and by the springs of water He will guide them(נהלם). Rashi generally brings proof from the first instance that the Torah or the Prophet uses a word. Aside from that, we have two additional reasons why 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 וינהלם, "He will guide them," exactly as the Torah uses the verb in our verse. The verse which Rashi does cite, however, uses the form of מנהל, meaning "one who guides."

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 negatively, "she has no guide."

3. Bereishis 34:17.

4. Bereishis 33:13 – 14.

5. Yeshaya 49:10.

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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."

We can ask the same question regarding the two proof texts Rashi cites. Why does Rashi say that "*it is similar*" to the words in the examples rather than saying that the terms have the same meaning?

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

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 does not 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 another 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 proving from the way Tanach – Bible is using the word. There is only one place in the Bible where this word is used precisely in this form. By citing this word, he explains how the Torah uses it here and why it can be used with food.

The Book of Tehillim 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. Instead, it means that he took care of their every need. A shepherd does not merely lead his flock in the wilderness but is devoted to them. The shepherd ensures that each sheep's needs are met most suitably.

The same is valid here. After the Torah told us⁷ that "the money was depleted from the land of Egypt ... and Yosef gave them food ...," it says that how he distributed the food was "- וינהלם he provided them with food ... in that year." He did not merely give them food; he distributed it specifically, calculating and dividing the food to last for an entire year.

6. Tehillim 78:52.

7. Bereishis 47:15 – 17.

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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" refers to the Jewish nation, it refers to something more than taking us by the hand and leading us; instead, it relates to guidance. It means governing a nation and taking care of them. That also explains why Rashi does not cite the earlier instance of the word in Yeshaya or any of the other examples of the verb ניהול used in Tanach. In those instances, it can mean taking one by the hand and physically guiding him.

However, "she has no guide" is insufficient proof of Rashi's point. Granted, it does not mean physically leading one in a particular direction because it refers to a nation. Nonetheless, it can mean figuratively leading a nation along a specific path. Therefore, Rashi also brings a second proof text from Tehillim, "He leads me beside still waters." Hashem is leading us by providing us with a 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 allegorical. 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 portion that⁸ "Yosef gathered all of the silver⁹ in the land of Mitzraim ... and 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 that is borne of intellect. Contemplating and meditating on the greatness of Hashem creates a feeling of love toward Him in my heart. The second sort of love is a natural love concealed within the heart of each 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 we observe is derived from the Divine, spiritual world. Just as there are these two types of love, so are there two types of grain. There is grain planted, which is related to the love of G-d, which we plant. We form this love within ourselves due to our work and mental stimulation. The other sort of grain is an after-growth grain that seems to grow independently and grows from seeds that fell upon the earth earlier. This sort of grain is related to the natural, hidden love previously planted within the soul.

Who is the one that plants this hidden love within Jewish souls? Yosef the Supernal Tzaddik – Saint. Kabbalistic terms refer to his spiritual level as "the Gardener of the Supernal Garden." Yosef plants and draws down spiritual light

8. Our Parshas, 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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within the Garden, 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, 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, i.e., leading. However, there is a difference between the two. הנהיגה means leading someone by the hand, remaining close to the one who is being directed. 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 although it may seem as if my natural feeling of love for G-d has "sprouted" on its own, it is rooted in a primordial light.

The revelation of this light is from a force that is totally above creation, and therefore, the person is not aware of its source. It was not "planted" now; instead, it was planted earlier by the spiritual level of Yosef. The individual was led "along peaceful waters." There are many aftergrowths along the shore. However, the only way to reveal this innate love of Hashem is by contemplating 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, all secrets and mysteries are revealed. This includes the ultimate secret of the coming of our redemption. This is in keeping with Moshiach's promise to the Baal Shem Tov that when the Baal Shem Tov's fountains are spread forth to the outside, the ultimate redemption will arrive.

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

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

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11. Talmud Eiruvim 65, a.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

the Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim, Aiden Oded, and Zacharya Matan** שׂיחיו 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 M. and Chaya Mushka** שׂיחיו
Morris

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Mrs. Esther שׂתחיו **Sharabani**

May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

*

DEDICATED BY HER SON

Mr. Gershon (Geri) 'שׂי Bentov

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם"

חיים, עדן עודד וזכרי' מתן שיחיו

מאריס

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו

מאריס

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לזכות

מרת אסתר שתחי' שרבני

**לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות עד ביאת גואל צדק
ומתוך בריאות הנכונה ולשנת ברכה והצלחה בגו"ר**

נדפס ע"י בנה

ר' גרשון שי' בן טוב