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Sustaining with Love

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation, while maintaining readability. The translation, however, carries no official authority. As in all translations, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

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1.

HE LED THEM

At the end of our *parshah*, the Torah recounts how Yosef sustained the residents of Egypt (and Canaan), and how, when they ran out of money to buy food, Yosef traded them “bread” for their livestock. The verse says:¹ “Yosef gave them bread in return for the horses... וַיִּנְהֹלֵם with bread for all their livestock during that year.”

Rashi quotes the word, “וַיִּנְהֹלֵם” and explains:

Similar to “וַיִּנְהֹגֵם {he led them}.” Likewise, “there is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her”;² “by calm waters יִנְהֹלֵנִי {He will lead me}.”³

Learning these remarks straightforwardly, one assumes that Rashi’s intent is to define the word וַיִּנְהֹלֵם, since this verb is uncommon in Scripture. Therefore, Rashi also provides proofs for his definition — other sources — where the verb “נהל” means “to lead.”

However, we need to clarify:

a) We find this verb **earlier** in Scripture:⁴ “I will אֶתְנַהֵלָה at my slow pace,” and there, Rashi does **not** define it. Thus, however we look at it, a difficulty remains. If a novice student of Scripture⁵ knows the definition of the verb (and therefore, Rashi does not need to define it when it appears [for the first time]), why, then, is it necessary to define this word in our *parshah*? On the other hand, if the novice student is unfamiliar with the meaning of this word (and therefore,

¹ Bereishis 47:17.

² Yeshayahu 51:18.

³ Tehillim 23:2.

⁴ Bereishis 33:14. {The context of this verse: Esav offers Yaakov to travel with him and his family. Yaakov refuses and says, “I will travel at a slow pace.”}

⁵ {“Ben chamesh lemikra” in the Hebrew original, meaning, “a five-year-old beginning to study Scripture.” This is a term borrowed from *Pirkei Avos* 5:21, which teaches that the appropriate age for a child to begin studying *Chumash* is at the age of five. Rashi wrote his commentary on *Chumash* to solve problems that a 5-year-old student would encounter in understanding the simple meaning of a verse. Additionally, Rashi never expects the student to know more than the plain meaning of the earlier verses in the Torah.}

Rashi needs to define it in our *parshah*), Rashi should have defined the meaning the **first** time it appears: “I will אֶתְנַהֵלָהּ at my slow pace.”

b) Why does Rashi offer two proofs for his definition? Why does he consider that one proof is insufficient?

c) Why does Rashi present the (first) proof from the verse (in *Yeshayahu*) — “There is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her” — and not from an **earlier** verse (in *Yeshayahu*):⁶ “Along springs of water יְנַהֵלם {He will guide them}”? Moreover: (a) this verse contains a form of the verb very similar to the form וַיְנַהֵל in our verse; and (b) in this verse, the word (יְנַהֵלם {He will guide them}) is written in a positive form, as in our verse, whereas the verse, “there is **none** to מְנַהֵל {lead} her” is written in the negative.

d) Rashi gives “וַיְנַהֵגם {he led them}” as the definition of the word “וַיְנַהֵלם.” Rashi, thus, should have said (not, “**this has the same meaning as** וַיְנַהֵגם...,” but rather) “וַיְנַהֵלם, an **expression** of leadership” (or, “etymologically related to the word וַיְנַהֵגם,” or something to that effect).

e) Why does Rashi write, “**similarly**, ‘there is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her...,’” and not, “and also...” (as Rashi usually does in similar instances)?⁷

All this shows that {the use of the root verb in the two verses} “There is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her,” and, “By calm waters יְנַהֵלֵנִי {He will lead me}” are not exactly the same as וַיְנַהֵל in our verse.

⁶ *Yeshayahu* 49:10.

⁷ For example, Rashi on *Bereishis* 46:29.

2.

SEE THE CONTEXT

The explanation:

Rashi wrote his commentary in the Holy Tongue.⁸ Thus, he does not need to define any common word in the Holy Tongue because anyone studying Rashi's commentary will know how to define it.

Consequently, Rashi does not need to define the word אֶתְּנַהֲלֵם because the novice student of Scripture (who studies Rashi — in the Holy Tongue) knows this word's definition — “I will lead” (myself, my children, my sheep, and cattle).

Regarding the verse in our *parshah*, however, which says, “וַיְנַהֲלֵם with **bread**,” we cannot understand the word as meaning that “he **led** them (with bread).”

The *Targum* translates this verse as, “He **sustained** them with bread.” However, according to *pshat*,⁹ Rashi cannot explain the verse this way. Scripture **already** said, “Yosef gave them bread for the horses....” True, here the verse adds, “for all their livestock that year.” But for this additional point alone, Scripture need not have repeated, “וַיְנַהֲלֵם with bread.” The verse could have merely added, “for all their livestock that year.”

Therefore, Rashi must explain: “This has the same meaning as “וַיְנַהֲגֵם {he led them}.” Rashi does not mean to **let us know** וַיְנַהֲלֵם connotes leadership (for this is insufficient, and does not fit in context, as discussed). Rather, by making this remark, Rashi (also and) primarily intends to refer us to the term וַיְנַהֲגֵם in Scripture (*Tehillim*):¹⁰ “וַיְנַהֲגֵם {He led them} like a flock in the wilderness.”

⁸ {Hebrew.}

⁹ The plain meaning of Scripture. Rashi says in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: “I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Scripture.” Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.

¹⁰ *Tehillim* 78:52.

Therefore, Rashi says, “**This has the same meaning as וַיִּנְהֲגֵם**,”¹¹ and it does not “connote leadership,” or the like.

On this basis, we can also understand how the term וַיִּנְהֲלֵם is appropriate when used in the context of bread, as will be explained.

3.

SPECIAL LEADERSHIP – וַיִּנְהֲלֵם

The term, “וַיִּנְהֲגֵם,” used in *Tehillim* does not mean that Hashem led the people on an ordinary, pedestrian, journey. Rather, Hashem led them with a **unique** style of leadership (like a flock in the wilderness). Meaning, He took care of all of their needs like a shepherd who guides his flock in the wilderness. This work requires devotion, etc., to ensure that in all respects, the needs of the flock are taken care of in a beneficial and befitting manner.

The same holds true in our situation: After the Torah recounts, “The money was exhausted...¹² and Yosef gave them bread...,” the verse adds that he gave them bread in the manner of, “וַיִּנְהֲלֵם with bread,... during that year.” He not only fed them, he “led” the feeding process in a unique and appropriate manner, calculating and distributing the bread so that it would last for the entire year (and it would not all be depleted at once at the beginning of the year, **or the like**).

[This is similar to what Scripture records **earlier**:¹³ “Yosef sustained his father and his brothers and all of his father’s household with food according to the children.” That is, “according to the needs of all the members of their

¹¹ Since this word (וַיִּנְהֲגֵם) is written in the Scripture only once, it is clear which verse Rashi is quoting. He does not find it necessary to quote additional words from the verse (or the like) in order to clarify which verse he is referring to.

¹² {*Bereishis* 47:15.}

¹³ *Bereishis* 47:12.

household.”¹⁴ He even took into consideration the fact that children typically crumble {and waste some of} their bread.}]¹⁵

We find that Yosef conducted himself this way throughout the entire time of gathering food during the years of plenty. He concerned himself personally, and ensured that the produce would remain edible for the entire duration of the famine. As Rashi explains on the verse,¹⁶ “he placed food in the cities; the food of the field that was around each city he placed within it” — Yosef did this because “each and every land preserves its fruits; therefore, they mixed into the produce some of the soil from the land where it grew, and the soil prevented the produce from rotting.”

4.

LITERAL TRAVELING

Thus, וַיְנַהֵל does not denote ordinary and prosaic ניהול {leadership}. Therefore, Rashi must quote sources and instances where the word ניהול is not used conventionally, as in leading another person, but rather, where the word denotes a unique sort of leadership. Therefore, Rashi says, “Similarly, “There is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her.” In that verse, too, the definition of the word מְנַהֵל is **similar** to וַיְנַהֵל, since that verse refers to leading the Jewish nation as a whole. Thus, the verse certainly refers to leadership in a general sense.

On this basis, we can appreciate why Rashi does not quote the earlier verse (in *Yeshayahu*), “Along springs of water יְנַהֵלם {He will lead them}.” This phrase is a thematic continuation of the words, “for their Merciful One יְנַהֵגם {will lead them}.” “יְנַהֵגם” denotes leadership in a general sense (since the verse says simply, “for their Merciful One יְנַהֵגם {will lead them},” specifying no details about the style of leadership). Therefore, ostensibly, the verse does not need to repeat this point. Thus, “along springs of water יְנַהֵלם {He will lead them}” is to be

¹⁴ Rashi on *Bereishis* 47:12.

¹⁵ *Sifsei Chachamim* on *Bereishis* 47:12.

¹⁶ *Bereishis* 41:48.

interpreted simply as meaning, actual, physical leadership, showing them the way to a (place with a) body of water. This is a thematic continuation of the beginning of the verse: “They will not hunger **or thirst...**”

On this basis, we can also appreciate why Rashi does not quote the verse from *parshas Beshalach*:¹⁷ “גִּהַלְתָּ {You led} with your might to Your holy abode.” There, too, we could assume that “גִּהַלְתָּ” means, simply, that he led them to travel “to Your holy abode.”¹⁸

The same applies to the other sources in the Prophets and Writings¹⁹ where this term גִּיהוּל appears. They do not refer specifically to leadership, in a general sense, but rather (they also refer to) גִּיהוּל {leading} on an actual journey.

5.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC

However, the verse, “There is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her” is not (exactly) parallel to our case. Although this verse does not refer to leading another on an actual journey, the overarching leadership (whereby the leader tends to all the needs of the country and its population) still resembles the leadership exercised in an actual journey.

Consequently, this verse does not prove **incontestably** that in the phrase, “וַיִּנְהַלֵּם **with bread**,” used here, the verb וַיִּנְהַלֵּם, which denotes general leadership and management, can be used in the particular context of bread – of providing sustenance.

Therefore, Rashi offers support from a second verse: “By calm waters he will יִנְהַלֵּנִי {lead me}.” Here, the verb, “יִנְהַלֵּם,” used in its broader sense, appears in the context of “calm waters,” a specific matter, **drink.**”

¹⁷ *Shemos* 15:13.

¹⁸ “You led... to Your holy abode,” – a specific place; this seems to refer to actual leading. This is in contrast to the verse, “He led them like a flock in the wilderness” {which refers to Hashem taking care of all their needs}.

¹⁹ *Tehillim* 31:4; *Divrei HaYamim II* 28:15, 32:22.

Rashi quotes this proof only after the proof from the verse, “There is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her.” This is because the verse, “By calm waters, He will יְנַהֵלְנִי {lead me},” is a **metaphor** referring to people’s needs, **in general**, as this chapter of *Tehillim* begins,²⁰ “Hashem is my shepherd, **I lack nothing**. He has me lie down in green pastures.”

Thus, we would presume that the term “יְנַהֵלְנִי,” used metaphorically, refers to literal נִיהוּג — to calm waters (similar to, “along springs of water יְנַהֵלֵם {He will guide them}”), just like the beginning of the verse, “**He has me lie down** in green pastures,” and is not being used for the theme of our discussion, in which Hashem cares for all the Jewish people’s needs (beginning with food and drink) appropriately.

However, once we see from the verse “there is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her” that the term נִיהוּג is appropriate not only in the context of leading a physical journey, we can also interpret the verse “by calm waters, He will יְנַהֵלְנִי {lead me}” as a reference to Hashem caring for all of a person’s needs: arranging and supplying food and drink, etc.

So it turns out that specifically by combining these two verses together, we understand the use of the word “similarly.” Meaning, the expression יְנַהֵלֵם is used not only regarding leading a physical journey and not only regarding the overarching leadership a country or nation, etc. Rather, the term is used regarding general leadership, but in a specific matter — feeding the people.

²⁰ See Rashi, and the other commentaries, on *Tehillim* 23:2.

6.

TWO LOVES, TWO PLANTS

From “the wine of Torah”²¹ in Rashi’s commentary:

Commenting on the verse,²² “Yosef gathered all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt... and Yosef brought the money into Pharaoh’s palace,” the Alter Rebbe explains in *Torah Or*²³ that there are two general categories of love of Hashem:

(a) Love “**born**” of the intellect, generated by a person contemplating Hashem’s greatness, etc.; and (b) the hidden love **naturally** present in every Jew because of his G-dly soul. The G-dly soul naturally yearns for Hashem, its Source. This love, however, is obscured and concealed, and a person can awaken and reveal it through contemplation.

The difference between these two types of love is analogous to the difference between the two types of plant growth: (a) produce that grows from sowing; and (b) aftergrowth that grows on its own, not a result of recent sowing, but from an earlier batch of seeds, “which fell into the earth, previously.”

There is a comparable difference between the two types of love: Love created from contemplation resembles produce that grows from recently planted seeds. In contrast, the revelation of hidden love is analogous to the aftergrowth — it sprouts on its own, since the love was already “planted” in the soul “previously.”

The spiritual equivalent of Yosef²⁴ plants the hidden love in every Jew. For this reason he is called “the gardener of the garden”²⁵ — he plants and draws

²¹ {The deeper ideas in Torah.}

²² Bereishis 47:14.

²³ P. 44b.

²⁴ {In the Hebrew original, “Yosef, *tzaddik ha’elyon*”; lit., “the supernal {spiritual plane of} the righteous Yosef.”}

²⁵ {*Zohar*, vol. 2, 166b; *Torah Or*, “*Mikeitz*.”}

light {i.e., Divine influence} into the garden — into the source of the Jewish souls.

This explains {the deeper meaning of} the verse, “Yosef gathered all the money... and Yosef brought the money into Pharaoh’s palace.” All the *chesed* (“*keseif*”)²⁶ which is received by Yosef, he then draws into *malchus*,²⁷ the source of the Jewish souls — the flow of the hidden love to every Jew.

This is explained there {in *Torah Or*} at length.

7.

TWO TYPES OF LEADERSHIP ACCORDING TO *KABBALAH*

We can posit that this concept is alluded to in Rashi’s comments: “וַיְנַהֵלֵם — This has the same meaning as ‘וַיְנַהֵגֵם {he led them}.’ Similarly, ‘There is none to מְנַהֵל {lead} her...’:

The simple difference between the terms “הַנְּהַגָּה” and “הַנְּהַלָּה” is as follows: הַנְּהַגָּה is (typically) used for an obvious type of leadership, a leadership relationship where the connection between leader and the follower is clear. הַנְּהַלָּה refers to a more general type of leadership where the leader’s influence is not obviously evident and visible.

Rashi explains that the revelation of the hidden love (“וַיְנַהֵלֵם”) which exists in every Jewish person is “the same as ‘וַיְנַהֵגֵם.’” That is, it comes from and is **directed** by Yosef. However, “**Similarly, There is none** to מְנַהֵל {lead} her...” It only appears as if matters are orchestrated by themselves. But in truth, Yosef is the one who implanted the hidden love in every Jew individually. Since, however, the luminary is the “primordial light” beyond the continuum of Creation,²⁸ it is not evident how it originates from On High.

²⁶ {*Keseif* (money, also translated as *silver*) is etymologically related to the word *kisufin* — longing and desire. The attribute of *chesed*, kindness, is driven by love, and therefore symbolized by *keseif*.}

²⁷{Yosef personifies the *sefirah* of *yesod*. The function of *yesod* is to receive the flow from the higher *sefiros* and funnel it to *malchus*.}

²⁸ {*Seder Hishtalshehus*, in the Hebrew original.}

Therefore, Rashi continues and quotes the verse, “By calm waters, He will יְנַהֲלֵנִי {lead me}.” This verse alludes to both matters:

The revelation of the hidden love is not a result of current “sowing” Rather, it is analogous to the growth “by calm waters.” There, what grows is aftergrowth — plants that sprout on their own. Yet, the source of the aftergrowth is “calm waters,” the level of *yesod*, which epitomizes the supernal counterpart of Yosef.²⁹ This great light is drawn into *yesod* from a place beyond the continuum of Creation — from the level of *binah*,³⁰ called “calm waters,” as explained in *Kabbalah* and *Chassidus*.³¹

8.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

However, the way to actually reveal the hidden love is through contemplation. Our Rabbis taught that “when wine enters, the secret {*sod*} emerges.”³² In *Torah Or*, the Alter Rebbe explains³³ that “secret” refers to the hidden love, discussed above. Revealing this love is accomplished through contemplation — “the wine of Torah.”

In a similar vein, when a person studies “the wine of Torah,” i.e., the deeper dimension of Torah, “the secret emerges.” Ultimately, that which is obscured and utterly concealed will be revealed at the final Redemption.³⁴ As Moshiach promised the Baal Shem Tov,³⁵ Moshiach will come when the Baal Shem Tov’s wellsprings spread to the outside — the wellsprings of the Torah’s inner dimension.

— Based on a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Vayigash* 5736 (1975)

²⁹ {See fn. 24.}

³⁰ {Lit., “understanding,” the second of the three intellectual *sefiros*.}

³¹ *Yahel Or*, “*Tehillim*,” ch. 23; *Biur Hazohar LehaTzemach Tzedek*, “*Vayeitzei*,” p. 111 ff.; *Or HaTorah LeNach*, vol. 2, p. 825.

³² *Eruvin* 65a.

³³ *Torah Or*, 44b.

³⁴ {In the Hebrew original, “*keitz ha’geulah*”; lit., “the end (of days. i.e.) the Redemption.”} See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 10, p. 168, et passim.

³⁵ The Baal Shem Tov’s *Iggeres Hakodesh*, printed at the end of *Ben Poras Yosef*; the beginning of *Kesser Shem Tov*.