

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ה and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ה Ainsworth
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל Hakhel

A Visceral Experience

What made Matan Torah unique wasn't that they studied Torah or heard about the mitzvos, especially considering the fact that the Jewish people knew about all that even before Matan Torah. The primary unique factor was that everything then was visual. . . You cannot compare something you hear to something you actually see. Hearing about something is distant, whereas visuals are up close. When the Jewish people "saw the voice and the thunder" and they "saw what is usually heard," they internalized and authenticated the notion of "I am Hashem Your G-d." This is the reason why future generations cannot suffice with just remembering the events of Sinai, to recall something in the past, for then it would be distant and unreal. No, there must be some thing special—namely the mitzvah of Hakhel—that every Jew—men, women, and children—would assemble as they did at Sinai and "see themselves as if they were just now commanded regarding the Torah and heard it from G-d."

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סיפור חסידי Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber
Published by Kehot Publication Society

Inseparable Souls

His soul is bound with his soul (Vayigash 44:30)

In 1798, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was imprisoned by the czarist government on charges fabricated against him and the chassidic movement.

When he was brought before his interrogators, the first question they asked him was: "Are you of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov's people?" Rabbi Schneur Zalman later related that he knew that if he answered "no," he would be immediately released; nevertheless, he refused to disassociate himself from the Baal Shem Tov.

His 53 days of imprisonment in the Peter-Paul fortress in Petersburg were the most agonizing days of his life. He was forced to explain the basic tenets of Judaism and chassidism to the coarse Cossack minds of his questioners. He wept when he was asked "What is a Jew?", "What is G-d?", "What is the relationship of a Jew to G-d? Of G-d to a Jew?"—to hear these questions issuing from their vulgar mouths tore his heart to shreds.

One question in particular caused him great pain. It was Rabbi Schneur Zalman's custom to interject the expression "af" in his prayers, as did the Baal Shem Tov. His enemies misconstrued this to mean that he was beseeching the Almighty to pour His wrath ('af' in Hebrew) upon the czar and his government. To explain to the Russian officials the Baal Shem Tov's customs and his lofty reflections during prayer, was torture to Rabbi Schneur Zalman's soul.

Here too, Rabbi Schneur Zalman could have satisfied their queries with all sorts of answers. But his connection with the Baal Shem Tov, whom he called his 'grandfather in spirit', was so dear to him that he refused to disclaim it in even the slightest detail, even if only for appearances sake.

A Chassidic Kiss

Joseph harnessed his chariot and rode to Goshen toward his father; he showed himself to him, fell upon his neck, and wept... (Vayigash 46:29)

But Jacob did not embrace Joseph and did not kiss him; our sages tell us that he was reading the 'Sh'mah'.

Rashi's commentary

Jacob knew that never in his life would his love be aroused as it was at that moment, the moment of reunion with his most beloved son after 22 years of anguish and loss. So he chose to utilize this tremendous welling of emotion to serve His Creator, channeling it to fuel his love for G-d.

Chassidic saying

In 1892, Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch presented his twelve-year-old son, Yosef Yitzchok, with the manuscript of a ma'amar (a discourse of chassidic teachings) entitled Moh Rabu Ma'asechah¹ and said: "This is a chassidic kiss. In time I will explain." Four years later, he related the following incident to him:

The year was 1884. Late one night, Rabbi Sholom DovBer was studying with Rabbi Ya'akov Mordechai Bezfolov. Rabbi Sholom DovBer's family then lived in two rooms: one served as the bedroom, the other, as Rabbi Sholom DovBer's study. In this room also stood the cot of his only child, the four-year-old Yosef Yitzchok.

Little Yosef Yitzchok was an extremely beautiful child with a delicate and radiant face. Rabbi Ya'akov Mordechai, enthralled by the sleeping child, commented that the radiance of the child's countenance must reflect an inner purity of mind.

Rabbi Sholom DovBer was moved by a strong desire to kiss his son. But at that very moment he thought of the gold and silver that were used to beautify the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, transforming physical substances into something holy and spiritual. He thus decided to direct his overwhelming feelings of love for his son into a more spiritual gift: he would give his son a ma'amar instead of a kiss. He then sat down and wrote 'Moh Rabu Ma'asechah.'

1. lit. "How great are Your works..."

אור תורה
Ohr Torah

Translated by: **Yechiel Krisch**
Adapted from the teachings of the **Mezritcher Maggid**

Prayer To G-d, Or For G-d?

Although we technically ask for our needs during prayer, our intent must be not to benefit ourselves but to ensure that the Divine presence lacks nothing. For each soul is a piece of G-d, a proverbial limb of the Divine presence, and when the soul's needs go unfulfilled there is something missing on high. When we ask for our needs only so that there will be nothing lacking on high, our prayers are desirous and immune to interference from heavenly prosecutors. (Not so regarding those who pray only for their own needs and selfishly cry out: "Give me! Give me!")

The following verse (Vayigash 44:18) hints to this lesson: "And Yehuda approached him [Yosef] and said, 'Please, my lord, please let your servant speak into my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant, because you are like Pharaoh.'" Yehuda represents the Jewish people, who are called Yehudim, and the Midrash teaches that the word "approach" (הגשה) connotes prayer. The phrase "please, my lord" (כי אדוני) can also be read as "my L-rd is within me."

The first clause of the verse could thus be rendered: "When the Jewish people pray, they must do so on behalf of the "L-rd within them"—their souls, which are limbs of the Divine presence.

When we pray in this fashion, then no heavenly prosecutor could possibly "be angry with your servant"—for our intent is only to fill the Creator's need by praying for the Divine spark within.

Days of Tranquility

Our Sages state that Yosef sent his brothers back to their father Yaakov along with aged wine of the type that is pleasing the elderly, or more literally, *da'as zekeinim nochah heimenu*, “the mind of the elders relax from it.”

This was an allusion to the *yayin ha-meshumar*, the wine that G-d has preserved to be served to the righteous in the era of redemption, a metaphor for the revelation of *atik yomin*, “the ancient of days,” the highest level of *kesser* (the supernal crown) that will be revealed in the era of redemption.

This ancient wine causes the mind to relax, meaning that it flows from a level of G-dliness that transcends the supernal intellectual attributes, in an era of ultimate *menuchah*, tranquility.

Shelah

לקוטי שיחות A Sicha

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org
Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Yosef's Guidance

The Verse: The Torah describes how Yosef distributed bread to the Egyptians and Canaanites affected by the famine:

“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, and he provided them with food [in return] for all their livestock in that year” (Bereishis 47:17).

The Rashi: *And he provided them (Heb. וַיְנַהֵלם)—similar to וַיְנַהֵגם, and he guided them. Similar to this is “She has no guide (מְנַהֵל)” (Yeshayahu 51:18), “He leads me (יְנַהֵלֵנִי) beside still waters” (Tehillim 23:2).*

The Questions:

- 1) Why does Rashi need to explain the word וַיְנַהֵלם, which literally means “to guide, to cause others to move”? We have seen this word previously, when Yaakov told Eisav, “Now, let my master go ahead before his servant, and I will move (אתנהל) [at] my own slow pace” (Ibid 33:14), yet there Rashi does not provide any commentary!?
- 2) Why does Rashi provide two proof-texts to support his explanation?

The Explanation: Rashi does not need to provide translation of common Hebrew words; his com-

mentary assumes a basic knowledge of biblical Hebrew. Thus, the word וַיְנַהֵלם does not need to be explained, it means to cause others to move ahead, as in the context of Yaakov's speech to Eisav.

But in our context, the phrase “and he guided them with bread” is troubling. What does it mean to guide someone with bread?

Rashi therefore says, “וַיְנַהֵגם, similar to וַיְנַהֵלם, and he guided them.” The word וַיְנַהֵגם occurs only once in Tanach, in Tehillim, where King David says, “and He led them as a flock in the desert” (78:52). The guidance referred to in this verse is not a general concern but a shepherd's specific array of concerns—does the flock have what to eat and drink, is it safe from harm, are they sick, is it warm enough?

Thus, Rashi means to suggest that the term וַיְנַהֵלם in our verse refers to the fact that Yosef provided the Egyptians with sustenance in a tailored manner, with specific guidance. This guidance was to ensure that the food would last them for that entire year, and not be exhausted prematurely. As the verse continues, “he provided them with food [in return] for all their livestock **in that year.**”

To prove that וַיְנַהֵלם can refer to specific, tailored guidance for an entire nation, and not just simply physical movement, Rashi cites two verses. “She

has no guide (מְנַהֵל) refers to the Jewish people not having guidance as a people, thus we see that the verb can refer to guidance in an abstract sense, not just physical movement. Yet that verse still uses the verb to refer to general guidance, not tailored guidance for a specific activity. Therefore Rashi cites a second verse, “He leads me (יְנַהֵלֵנִי) beside still waters” to show that the verb can refer to guidance in specific needs, like water.

The Deeper Dimension: There are two paths to cultivating a love of G-d. 1) Through deliberate and intensive contemplation on Divine themes an authentic love of G-d is born; 2) Less intensive meditation can awaken and reveal the innate love of G-d that lies dormant in every Jewish soul.

The first is likened to growing produce through deliberately seeding a field, the second is likened to the produce that grows spontaneously from latent seeds from a previous season.

The Alter Rebbe explains that “Yosef” is the one who “seeds” the Jewish soul with this innate love of G-d, so that it is always available to come to the

surface. This is the meaning of the verse, “And Yosef collected all the money that was found in the land of Egypt... and brought the money into Pharaoh’s house.” The “money” is the flow of Divine love and kindness which Yosef deposits into the subconscious of the Jewish soul.

Rashi alludes to this interplay in his commentary: Generally, וְיִנְהַלֵם refers to an impersonal guidance that seems to come from afar, the attachment between the guide and guided is not evident. וְיִנְהַגֵם refers to a more personal guidance, where the relationship between the guide and the guided is clear.

Thus, וְיִנְהַלֵם alludes to the innate love of G-d which seems to surface spontaneously, without a clear inspiration or guidance. But the truth is, as Rashi says, “וְיִנְהַגֵם, similar to וְיִנְהַלֵם” that what appears to be spontaneous is actually intentionally guided and seeded by Yosef. The love of G-d that is innate is not our own, it was planted within us.

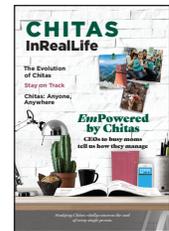
Nonetheless, this innate love still relies on our efforts of contemplation to be revealed.

Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 399ff

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Vayigash, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 39 – 43
Tanya*	Likkutei Amarim Chapter 8. עמ' 24 - פרק ח. ועוד... עד עמ' יג- הקדוש.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #98
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Mishpatim – Hilchos Malveh V'Loveh, Chapter 23
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Taharah – Hilchos Tum'as Ochalin Chapters 10 – 12

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