

Parsha Q&A



Parshat Ha'azinu

For the week ending 8 Tishrei 5760
17 & 18 September 1999

Parsha Questions

1. Why were heaven and earth specifically chosen as witnesses?
2. How is the Torah like rain?
3. How is Hashem "faithful without injustice"?
4. Why is Hashem called "tzaddik"?
5. How many major floods did Hashem bring upon the world?
6. What group of people does the Torah call "fathers"? Cite an example.
7. Why did Hashem separate the world's nations into exactly 70?
8. Why is the merit of the Jewish People's ancestry called a "rope"?
9. How is Hashem's behavior toward the Jewish People like an eagle's behavior toward its offspring?
10. Regarding the Jewish People's punishment, Hashem says "I will spend my arrows on them." What is the positive aspect of this phrase?
11. How does the idea of "chillul Hashem" prevent the nations from destroying the Jewish People?
12. What will happen to the nations that conquer the Jewish People?
13. When Hashem overturns a nation that persecutes the Jewish People, His attribute of Mercy is "replaced" by which attribute?
14. When Hashem punishes the heathen nations, for whose sins does He exact punishment?
15. How will Hashem's punishment change the way the nations view the Jewish People?
16. On what day was Ha'azinu taught to the Jewish People?
17. Verse 32:44 calls Yehoshua "Hoshea." Why?
18. In verse 32:47, what does "it is not empty from you" mean?
19. Why did Hashem tell Moshe that he would die a similar death to that of Aharon?
20. If Moshe had spoken to the rock rather than striking it, what would the Jewish People have learned?

KASHA!

(kasha means "question")

How would you answer this question on the Parsha?

Brent Worth from Waukeegan wrote:

I was surprised to read the verse that talks about the Jewish people consuming "milk from sheep with the fat of rams..." (*Devarim 32: 14*). How could they do that? Isn't it forbidden to eat meat and milk together?

Dear Brent Worth,

Nice question. The verse you quote is part of what the Torah calls "*shira*" — poetic song, and thus can be explained figuratively. But even if taken literally, remember that the Torah only forbade milk and meat that are cooked together; whereas cold milk and meat are

forbidden only by Rabbinic decree. Thus, the Torah could describe the consumption of cold milk and meat occurring *before* the Sages decreed against it.

see Ibn Ezra

I Did Not Know That!

"Ha Lashem Tigmalu Zot?" (32:6)

The above verse starts with an unusual letter "*hey*." It is unusual in two ways: It is larger than normal, and it is written far away from the word that it goes with. The Midrash sees this as a hint to Moshe's name, as follows: Start from the beginning of the parsha and take the first letter of each verse. Do this up to and including the above verse. Now take the numerical value of those letters and you get 345, which equals the numerical value of "Moshe." Thus, Moshe "signed" his name in this song at the end of the Torah. (Taking after Moshe's example, Jewish poets through the ages have encoded their names into their works.)

Based on Midrash Tanchuma

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

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Parshat Ha'azinu — 8 Tishrei 5760, 17 & 18 September 1999

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

ohr@virtual.co.il

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

Somayach@MSN.com

Production Design: Eli Ballon

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

32:1 Biblical Witnesses
32:16 The Rebuke of Ha'azinu
32:40 The Testimony of Ha'azinu

Sforno

32:2 Waters of the Torah
32:13 Purpose of Eretz Yisrael
32:19 Purpose of Galus
32:27 Salvation of Dispersion

Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 32:1 - They endure forever.
2. 32:2 - The Torah gives life and promotes growth like rain.
3. 32:4 - He is "faithful" by rewarding the righteous, and "without injustice" by rewarding even the wicked for any good deeds.
4. 32:4 - All will agree that His judgments are righteous.
5. 32:7 - Two. One in the time of Adam's grandson Enosh and one in the time of Noach.
6. 32:7 - The Prophets. Elisha called the Prophet Eliyahu "My Father." (*Melachim II 2:12*).
7. 32:8 - To correspond to the 70 *Bnei Yisrael* who entered Egypt.
8. 32:9 - Their merit is "woven from" the merits of the *Avot*.
9. 32:12 - He mercifully wakes them gently, hovering over them, and carrying them on His "wings."
10. 32:23 - "The arrows will be spent" implies that the afflictions will cease but the Jewish People will not.
11. 32:27 - The nations would attribute their success to their might and the might of their gods. Hashem would not let His name be desecrated like this.
12. 32:35 - They will eventually be punished.
13. 32:41 - His attribute of Justice.
14. 32:42 - For their sins and the sins of their ancestors.
15. 32:43 - They will view the Jewish People as praiseworthy for cleaving to Hashem.
16. 32:44 - The Shabbat upon which Moshe died.
17. 32:44 - To indicate that although he was the Jewish People's leader, he still maintained a humble bearing.
18. 32:47 - That you will receive reward for studying Torah and that there is nothing meaningless in the Torah.
19. 32:50 - Because Moshe wanted this.
20. 32:51 - The Jewish People would have reasoned as follows: If a rock, which receives neither reward nor punishment, obeys Hashem's commands, all the more so should they.