



# Parshas Ha'azinu

For the week ending 13 Tishrei 5759  
2 - 3 October 1998

## Overview

**M**ost of Parshas Ha'azinu is a song, written in the Torah in two parallel columns. Moshe summons heaven and earth to stand as eternal witness to what will happen if the Jewish People sin. He reminds the people to examine world history and note how the Jewish People are rescued from obliteration in each generation — that Hashem “pulls the strings” of world events so that Bnei Yisrael can fulfill their destiny as Hashem’s messengers. Hashem’s kindness is such that Israel should be eternally grateful, not just for sustaining them in the wilderness, but for bringing them to a land of amazing abundance, and for defeating their enemies. But, this physical bounty leads the people to become self-satisfied and over-indulged. Physical pleasures corrupt their morals. They worship empty idols and indulge in depravity. Hashem will then let nations with no moral worth subjugate Israel and scatter them across the world. However, the purpose of these nations is as a rod to chastise the Jewish People. When these nations think that it is through their own power that they have dominated Israel, Hashem will remind them that they are no more than a tool to do His will. The purpose of the Jewish People is to make mankind aware of the Creator. Neither exile nor suffering can sever the bond between Hashem and His people, and in the final redemption this closeness will be restored. Hashem will then turn His anger against the enemies of Israel. Hashem then gives His last commandment to Moshe: That he ascend Mount Nevo and be gathered there to his people.

## Insights

*A COPPER PENNY*

**“For Hashem’s portion is His people; Yaakov is the measure of His heritage.” (32:9)**

**O**nce there was a young boy standing in the courtyard of the shul in Vilna. He was bent over, his eyes scouring the pavement, searching intently for something. He looked here and there. Occasionally he would stoop lower and examine the ground to see if he had found what he was searching for. In frustration, tears began to well in his eyes.

The time came for mincha, the afternoon prayer, and the courtyard began to fill with people. They all noticed the little boy crying and searching. “What are you looking for?” They asked him. “My mother gave me a copper penny and I lost it on my way to cheder (school),” came the tearful reply. Everyone started to help him look for the copper penny. They scoured the courtyard. Not a single square inch was left unexamined.

It was not to be found.

Someone said to the little boy, “Show me exactly where you were when you lost it.” In all innocence, the little boy replied: “Actually I didn’t lose it here. I lost it in the street.” “So why are you looking for it here in the courtyard of the shul?” came the startled reply. “Because the street is all muddy and dirty and I didn’t want to soil my shoes.”

The mystical sources teach us that there are many worlds above this one. Compared to those worlds, the world in which we live is a very dark dank place. A place of messy physicality. A place of

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

info@ohr.org.il

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

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

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

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

Somayach@MSN.com

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Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

Production Design: Eli Ballon

concealment. If "Hashem's portion is His people; Yaakov is the measure of His heritage," then why did G-d put us in this lowly world? Why didn't He put us in a higher, more spiritual world?

The Torah is the essence of the whole creation. If it were not for the Torah, the physical world and all its myriad laws would never have come into being. The Torah does not exist for the benefit of the incorporeal spiritual beings who inhabit the upper worlds. G-d wanted the Torah to be in this lowest of the worlds. Therefore, G-d also put us into this world so that we should involve ourselves with His Torah, day and night.

When a jewel is buried in the mud, there's no alternative but to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty. If we search for riches where there are none, even if we conduct the search in climate-controlled, air-conditioned luxury, we won't even end up with a copper penny.

#### HEAVEN AND EARTH

***"Hearken Heavens and I will speak. Listen Earth to the words of my mouth." (32:1)***

**G**reatness carries a tremendous responsibility. A great person's actions are analyzed in fine detail, and people of lesser stature imitate them. "The Heavens" symbolize the great people of the generation.

The "Earth" symbolizes the ordinary person. Thus, if the "Heavens," those on the lofty levels, hearken, then the "Earth," the lower echelons, will also hear.

#### THE WORLD IS A SONG

***"Ha'azinu" (32:1)***

**A**lmost the whole of Parshas Ha'azinu is written as a song.

One of the qualities of a song is that it always returns to the same place. It's a circle. A circle has no beginning and no end; where you start is where you finish. Its beginning is its end and its end, its beginning. Song always accompanies completion: When the creation was completed, Adam sang Mizmor Shir L'yom HaShabbos — A Song for the Day of Shabbos. When the Exodus was completed at the Red Sea, the Jewish People sang the Shirat HaYam — The Song of the Sea. And when King Solomon finished the Beis Hamikdash, he sang Shir HaShirim — the Song of Songs.

Shir, song, represents the finishing of something in its complete form. Song is a paradigm of creation itself. When something reaches its completion in creation, it arrives back at the point of its departure. In other words, when we create something, the point of departure for our creation is the wish, the will that a certain thing should exist. When something reaches the point where it fulfills the wish of its creator, it is completed. When something emerges from the world of wanting, the world of potential, to the world of actuality, then it has returned to the point of its departure. We look at it and we say "That's what I wanted!" In this week's Parsha, the penultimate Parsha of the Torah, there is a song, Ha'azinu, which marks the completion of the Torah. On a deeper level, the whole Torah is called a Song:

*"Write this song and teach it to the Children of Israel." The world only reaches its completion with the Torah. It's as if G-d says, "That's it! This is the way the world is supposed to be. It's finished."*

Sources:

*A Copper Penny - Chafetz Chaim*

*Heaven And Earth - Toras Moshe in Mayana shel Torah*

## Haftorah Shmuel II 1-51

**T**his Haftorah is known as "The Song of David," which David wrote in his youth when he was beset by so many troubles. It is an all-inclusive psalm, relating to any possible evil which could occur during David's lifetime. He kept this psalm with him throughout life, reciting it in in praise every time David experienced Hashem's salvation.

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