

SHABBAT LEARNING MATERIAL

PARSHAT HAAZINU

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12 TISHREI 5787



YESHIVA MIZRACHI
ישיבה מזרחי



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3

Parsha in a Nutshell

❖ *Chabad.org*

Choose Life!

❖ *Rabbi Eli Scheller Appel (Aish.com)*

Pages 4 – 6

To Renew our Days

❖ *Rabbi Jonathan Sacks*

Pages 7 - 10

**Children's Learning:
HaMizrachi**

Haazinu in a Nutshell (Chabad.org)

The name of the Parshah, "Haazinu," means "Listen" and it is found in Deuteronomy 32:1.

The greater part of the Torah reading of Haazinu ("Listen In") consists of a 70-line "song" delivered by Moses to the people of Israel on the last day of his earthly life.

Calling heaven and earth as witnesses, Moses exhorts the people, "Remember the days of old / Consider the years of many generations / Ask your father, and he will recount it to you / Your elders, and they will tell you" how G-d "found them in a desert land," made them a people, chose them as His own, and bequeathed them a bountiful land. The song also warns against the pitfalls of plenty—"Yeshurun grew fat and kicked / You have grown fat, thick and rotund / He forsook G-d who made him / And spurned the Rock of his salvation"—and the terrible calamities that would result, which Moses describes as G-d "hiding His face." Yet in the end, he promises, G-d will avenge the blood of His servants, and be reconciled with His people and land.

The Parshah concludes with G-d's instruction to Moses to ascend the summit of Mount Nebo, from which he will behold the Promised Land before dying on the mountain. "For you shall see the land opposite you; but you shall not go there, into the land which I give to the children of Israel."

The Missing Puzzle Pieces (Aish.com)

by Rabbi Eli Scheller

The Rock! – perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; a God of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He. (32:4)

Few people need to be convinced that God created the world. However, situations may occur that are difficult to comprehend and leave even believers with many questions. There is a higher level of belief in God: not only did He create the world, but He is intimately involved in its day-to-day running. Hashem presses all the buttons and causes all events to occur, right down to the last detail.

It is for this reason that the Torah put the first commandment in the context of the exodus: *"I am your God who has taken you out of the land of Egypt."* Even though it would have been logical for God to identify himself as the Creator of the universe, a more all-inclusive title than that of engineer of the exodus, God was teaching us that He is also deeply involved in our everyday lives, intervening to pluck us out of Egypt.

A guest in a village did not understand why the more important members of the shul sat at the back, while the beggars and paupers sat at the front. When he questioned the shul president about it he was told, "You are confused because you are here for only one Shabbos. If you would be here every Shabbos you would understand that we have a procedure of alternating places which, over the course of a year, is fair to everybody." The Chofetz Chaim uses this parable to demonstrate that our questions and doubts over God's supervision of the world are due to our lack of understanding. God's management of this world is based on considerations of a 6,000 year time period. We are in this world for a sum total of 70, 80, or maybe 90 years. How can we expect to know the answers when we are missing parts of the puzzle?

To Renew our Days

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ZT"l

The moment had come. Moses was about to die. He had seen his sister Miriam and brother Aaron pre-decease him. He had prayed to God – not to live forever, not even to live longer, but simply, "Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan" (Deut. 3:25). Let me complete the journey. Let me reach the destination. But God said no: "*That is enough,*" the Lord said. "*Do not speak to Me anymore about this matter.*" (Deut. 3:26)

God, who had acceded to almost every other prayer Moses prayed, refused him this.[1]

What then did Moses do on these last days of his life? He issued two instructions, the last of the 613 commands, that were to have significant consequences for the future of Judaism and the Jewish people. The first is known as *Hakhel*, the command that the king should summon the people to gather during Succot following the seventh, *Shemittah* year: "*At the end of every seven years, in the year for cancelling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place He will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. Assemble the people – men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns – so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.*" (Deut. 31:10-13).

There is no specific reference to this command in the later books of Tanach, but there are accounts of very similar gatherings: covenant renewal ceremonies, in which the king or his equivalent assembled the nation, reading from the Torah or reminding the people of their history, and calling on them to reaffirm the terms of their destiny as a people in covenant with God. That, in fact, is what Moses had been doing for the last month of his life. The book of Deuteronomy as a whole is a restatement of the covenant, almost forty years and one generation after the original covenant at Mount Sinai. There is another example in the last chapter of the book of Joshua (see chapter 24 of the book of Joshua), once Joshua had fulfilled his mandate as Moses' successor, bringing the people across the Jordan, leading them in their battles, and settling the land.

Another occurred many centuries later in the reign of King Josiah. His grandfather, Menasseh, who reigned for fifty-five years, was one of the worst of Judah's kings, introducing various forms of idolatry, including child sacrifice. Josiah sought to return the nation to its faith, ordering among other things the cleansing and repair of the Temple. It was in the course of this restoration that a copy of the Torah was discovered,[2] sealed in a hiding place, to prevent it being destroyed during the many decades in which idolatry flourished and the Torah was almost forgotten. The king, deeply affected by this discovery, convened a *Hakhel*-type national assembly: "*Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. He went up to the Temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets – all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord – to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes, and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the Covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the Covenant.*" (2 Kings 23:1-3).

The most famous *Hakhel*-type ceremony was the national gathering convened by Ezra and Nehemiah after the second wave of returnees from Babylon (Neh. 8-10). Standing on a platform by one of the gates to the Temple, Ezra read the Torah to the assembly, having positioned Levites throughout the crowd so that they could explain to the people what was being said. The ceremony that began on Rosh Hashanah, culminated after Succot when the people collectively "bound themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord" (Neh. 10:29).

The other command – the last Moses gave the people – was contained in the words: "*Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites,*" understood by rabbinic tradition to be the command to write, or at least take part in writing, a Sefer Torah. Why specifically these two commands, at this time?

Something profound was being transacted here. Recall that God had seemed brusque in His dismissal of Moses' request to be allowed to cross the Jordan. "*That is enough ... Do not speak to Me anymore about this matter.*" Is this the Torah and this its reward? Is this how God repaid the greatest of the prophets? Surely not.

In these last two commands God was teaching Moses, and through him Jews throughout the ages, what immortality is – on earth, not just in heaven. We are mortal because we are physical, and no physical organism lives forever. We grow up, we grow old, we grow frail, we die. But we are not only physical. We are also spiritual. In these last two commands, we are taught what it is to be part of a spirit that has not died in four thousand years and will not die so long as there is a sun, moon, and stars.[3]

God showed Moses, and through him us, how to become part of a civilisation that never grows old. It stays young because it repeatedly renews itself. The last two commands of the Torah are about renewal: first collective, then individual.

Hakhel, the covenant renewal ceremony every seven years, ensured that the nation would regularly rededicate itself to its mission. I have often argued that there is one place in the world where this covenant renewal ceremony still takes place: the United States of America.

The concept of covenant played a decisive role in European politics in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, especially in Calvin's Geneva and in Scotland, Holland, and England. Its longest-lasting impact, though, was on America, where it was taken by the early Puritan settlers and remains part of its political culture even today. Almost every Presidential Inaugural Address – every four years since 1789 – has been, explicitly or implicitly, a covenant renewal ceremony, a contemporary form of *Hakhel*. In 1987, speaking at the bicentennial celebration of the American Constitution, President Ronald Reagan described the constitution as a kind of "covenant we've made not only with ourselves but with all of mankind... It's a human covenant; yes, and beyond that, a covenant with the Supreme Being to whom our founding fathers did constantly appeal for assistance." America's duty, he said, is "to constantly renew their covenant with humanity... to complete the work begun 200 years ago, that grand noble work that is America's particular calling – the triumph of human freedom, the triumph of human freedom under God." [4]

If *Hakhel* is national renewal, the command that we should each take part in the writing of a new Sefer Torah is personal renewal. It was Moses' way of saying to all future generations: It is not enough for you to say, I received the Torah from my parents (or grandparents or great-grandparents). You have to take it and make it new in every generation.

One of the most striking features of Jewish life is that from Israel to Palo Alto, Jews are among the world's most enthusiastic users of information technology and have contributed disproportionately to its development (Google, Facebook, Waze). But we still write the Torah exactly as it was done thousands of years ago – by hand, with a quill, on a parchment scroll. This is not a paradox; it is a profound truth. People who carry their past with them, can build the future without fear.

Renewal is one of the hardest of human undertakings. Some years ago, I sat with the man who was about to become Prime Minister of Britain. In the course of our conversation he said, "What I most pray for is that when we get there (he meant, 10 Downing Street), I never forget why I wanted to get there." I suspect he had in mind the famous words of Harold Macmillan, British Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963, who, when asked what he most feared in politics, replied, "Events, dear boy, events."

Things happen. We are blown by passing winds, caught up in problems not of our making, and we drift. When that happens, whether to individuals, institutions, or nations, we grow old. We forget who we are and why. Eventually we are overtaken by people (or organisations or cultures) that are younger, hungrier, or more driven than us. The only way to stay young, hungry, and driven is through periodic renewal, reminding ourselves of where we came from, where we are going, and why. To what ideals are we committed? What journey are we called on to continue? Of what story are we a part?

How precisely timed, therefore, and how beautiful, that at the very moment when the greatest of prophets faced his own mortality, that God should give him, and us, the secret of immortality – not just in heaven but down here on earth. For when we keep to the terms of the covenant, and making it new again in our lives, we live on in those who come after us, whether through our children or our disciples or those we have helped or influenced. We "renew our days as of old" (Lamentations 5:21). Moses died, but what he taught and what he sought lives on.

[1] There is an important lesson here: It is the prayers we pray for others, and others pray for us, that are answered; not always those we pray for ourselves. That is why when we pray for the healing of the sick or the comfort of the mourners we do so specifically "in the midst of others" who are ill or bereaved. As Judah Halevi pointed out in *The Kuzari*, the interests of individuals may conflict with one another, which is why we pray communally, seeking the collective good.

[2] This is Radak and Ralbag's understanding of the event. Abarbanel finds it difficult to believe that there were no other copies of the Torah preserved even during the idolatrous periods of the nation's history, and suggests that what was discovered sealed in the Temple was Moses' own Torah, written by his hand.

[3] See Jeremiah 31.

[4] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Ronald Reagan, 1987*, 1040-43.



AROUND THE Shabbat Table

1. Why do you think these two *mitzvot* were the last to be given to the Jewish people?
2. What more regular mitzvot achieve the same outcome as *hakhe*?
3. Have you ever been involved in the writing of a Sefer Torah? How did it feel (or how do you imagine it must feel)?



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הַמִּזְרָחִי HAMIZRACHI

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PARSHA WEEKLY

YOUTH EDITION

PARSHAT HA'AZINU 5786 • 2026

PARSHA SUMMARY

In Parshat Ha'azinu, Moshe shares a special song with Bnei Yisrael on the last day of his life. This song, which takes up most of the parsha, is a powerful message about the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. Moshe begins by calling on the heavens and the earth to listen as witnesses to what he's about to say. He reminds the people to learn from the past—to ask their parents and grandparents how Hashem found them in the desert, cared for them, chose them, and gave them a beautiful land.

Moshe warns that when the people become wealthy and comfortable, they might forget Hashem and turn away from Him. If that happens, hard times will come, and it may feel like Hashem is hiding His face. But even then, Moshe says, Hashem will never fully abandon His people. In the end, He will defend them and return to them with love.

The parsha ends with Hashem telling Moshe to go up Mount Nevo, where he will be able to see the Land of Israel from a distance. Hashem reminds Moshe that while he won't be entering the land himself, he has led the people all the way there and completed his mission.



MESSAGE FROM ISRAEL

History vs Memory

Toward the beginning of the parsha there is a command to remember the days of old (Devarim 32:7) - to study the lessons of history.

The important word which begins this command is not the word "study," but rather "remember." There is a huge difference between history and memory. In the Jewish view, our history is a type of collective memory. It is not, as some have said, external to ourselves - "His-story," something that happened to someone else, but it is rather our story. It is about us - who we are, where we come from, and why it is so important.

If we don't know where we came from, it is hard to know where we are going. If we can't remember who we are, we will struggle to understand who we should be.

Let us always remember and never forget.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi



Test Your Knowledge

Answers to the questions from Kids Corner in the Rosh Hashanah/ Yom Kippur HaMizrachi:



1. Tishrei
2. Ram
3. The shofar is blown

Dedicated by the Moshal family to the life and legacy of our family patriarch John Moshal – יוחנן הלל בן מרדכי ז"ל – a generous lifelong supporter of Jewish education.

QUESTIONS ON THE PARSHA

1. What is Hashem referred to as in this parsha?
2. Why was Moshe not allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael?
3. When does Hashem say that Bnei Yisrael will turn away from him?
4. How is the Torah like rain?
5. Who was next to Moshe when he was singing this song?
6. What does Moshe tell Bnei Yisrael to do with the words of the song?
7. When was the last time Moshe sang a song?
8. What is the difference between the two songs?
9. What is the song about?
10. What does Moshe predict in the final verse of the song?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When Your Role Changes

Near the end of Moshe's life, as Yehoshua prepares to take over the leadership of Bnei Yisrael, the Torah uses a surprising name for him: "הוא וְהוֹשֶׁעַ בֶּן־נּוּן" – "He and Hoshea son of Nun" (Devarim 32:44). But we usually know him as Yehoshua! Why does the Torah call him "Hoshea" here? Rashi explains that even after Yehoshua became the leader of Klal Yisrael, he remained as humble as he had been before. His new position did not make him arrogant or cause him to think he was better than others. Earlier, Moshe had changed his name from Hoshea to Yehoshua, adding the letter "א" as a tefillah that Hashem should protect him from the influence of the spies. Now Yehoshua was stepping into a completely new role – but the Torah reminds us that deep down, he remained the same humble Hoshea. Leadership does not mean becoming a different person. It means using new responsibility to bring out the best in yourself and to help others.

Dilemma of the Week – Suddenly, Everyone Is Watching: Moshe was chosen to lead his class's chesed project. At first, he was excited to help organize everything. But after a few weeks, he started giving orders, getting annoyed when other boys had different ideas, and insisting that everything be done his way. One day, his friend Ariel said, "Moshe, being the leader doesn't mean your ideas are always more important than everyone else's." Moshe was upset. "But I'm supposed to be in charge!" What should Moshe do?

Discussion Questions

A New Role: Why can getting a position of responsibility sometimes make someone behave differently?

Yehoshua's Example: What does Rashi teach us from the Torah calling Yehoshua "Hoshea"?

Being a Leader: What is the difference between being "in charge" and being a good leader?

Helping Others: How can someone use a position of responsibility to help the people around them?

Stay Yourself: Why is it important not to let success or popularity change the way we treat others?

SOLVE IT AND SEND IT!

Which famous rabbi is believed by some researchers to have been buried at Ancient Katzrin?

Send the answer to hamizrachiyouth@mizrachi.org to be entered into our monthly raffle!

PARSHA RIDDLE

Can you solve this Parsha riddle?

I have no mouth,
yet Moshe asks me to listen.

I have no ears,
yet I am called to hear.

I stretch above you wherever
you go,

And together with the earth,
I witness his song.

What am I?



The answer is in next week's edition!

Last Week's Answer: Hakhel



If you were given a new responsibility at school, at home, or with your friends, what could you do to make sure it makes you kinder and more helpful – not more bossy?

WE'D REALLY LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

As we look ahead to next year, we've put together a short survey about the HaMizrachi Parsha Weekly Youth Edition – how you use it, which sections you find most valuable, and what you'd like to see in the future. Please scan the QR code to fill out the survey.



WORD OF THE WEEK

רֶשֶׁף – Reshef – Flame/Fiery Blast

(Devarim 32:24) מִדֵּי רֶעֶב וְלֶחֶם יִרְשָׁף

The word רֶשֶׁף comes from the root ר-ש-פ (Reish-Shin-Feh), connected with fire, flame, and sudden burning force. In Tanach, the word can describe something fiery or destructive, fitting the harsh imagery of Haazinu. In modern Hebrew, רֶשֶׁף can also mean a flash or burst of flame, including the muzzle flash of a gun. The root keeps the same basic idea: a sudden, powerful burst of fire.



THIS MONTH IN JEWISH HISTORY

6 Tishrei

Passing of Rav Chanan Porat (5772/2011)

Rav Chanan Porat was a leading Religious Zionist rabbi, educator and public figure. As a child, he was evacuated from Kfar Etzion during Israel's War of Independence. After fighting in the Six-Day War and helping liberate Jerusalem's Old City, he became one of the leaders who worked to rebuild Kfar Etzion and renew Jewish settlement in the area. He later helped establish Yeshivat Har Etzion and became a prominent leader of Religious Zionism, serving as a member of Knesset for the Mafdal and other parties. Rav Porat passed away on 6 Tishrei 5772, at the age of 67.



MEET OUR READERS!

NAME: ALIZA MIMRAN

AGE: 6

LOCATION: CHARLESTON, SC, UNITED STATES



FAVORITE PARSHA: Lecha Lecha - I love Avraham Avinu

MY ROLE MODEL IS: Rambam, I learned from him to be really clever in science and also learn Torah.

WHERE I'D LIKE TO TRAVEL IN ISRAEL: The Kotel to Daven!

IF I COULD DO ONE BIG CHESED, IT WOULD BE: To feed hungry children

PARSHA ANSWERS

1. A rock.
2. Because Moshe had hit the rock at Mei Merivah instead of speaking to it.
3. When they become over-satisfied with the land.
4. The Torah gives life and promotes growth like rain.
5. Yehoshua.
6. Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael to take the words to heart and teach their children to follow the Torah.
7. After crossing the Yam Suf.
8. At the Yam Suf, Moshe's song celebrates Hashem saving Bnei Yisrael. In Ha'azinu, the song warns Bnei Yisrael about what will happen if they turn away from Hashem.
9. The future of the nation and urging the nation to follow in the ways of Hashem.
10. Hashem will avenge the death of his people.

JOURNEY THROUGH ISRAEL



PHOTO: GILABRAND/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

One of the most exciting discoveries at Ancient Katzrin is a carving of a menorah (מְנוֹרָה) with seven branches. It is a powerful reminder that Jewish life, Torah and community once flourished throughout the Golan.

Katzrin (קֶצְרִין)

Katzrin is a modern town in the Golan Heights, but nearby lies Ancient Katzrin (קֶצְרִין הַעתיקה), the remains of a Jewish village from the time of the Mishnah and Gemara. The village existed for hundreds of years and was home to Jewish families who lived, worked, and learned in the Golan. At the center of the village are the remains of an impressive ancient Beit Knesset. Inside, archaeologists discovered stone benches where people once sat, as well as carvings of a menorah and an Etz Chaim. An Aramaic inscription found there mentions a person who donated money to help build part of the synagogue. The village also had homes, streets and an ancient Beit Bad (בֵּית בַּד) – olive press, where olive oil was produced. Archaeologists believe that around 75 families, about 300 people, once lived in the village. In 749 CE, a powerful earthquake badly damaged the village and its synagogue. Today, parts of the village have been reconstructed, allowing visitors to walk through the streets and imagine Jewish life in the Golan many centuries ago.

קום התהלך בארץ

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you find 10 differences between these two parsha pictures?

