



Ha'azinu

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:1- 32:52

In *Parshat Ha'azinu*, Moses begins his farewell poem, calling on Heaven and Earth to be eternal witnesses to the truths he was about to declare. He contrasts G-d's perfection and faithfulness with the crooked and perverse ways of the people and calls on the people to ask of the older generation how the Almighty had chosen them from among the nations. G-d had cared for them in the wilderness "as an eagle ... hovers over her young." He alone had provided sumptuous foods in abundance, but *Jeshurun* (Israel's title of honor, here used ironically) had incurred G-d's wrath through the worship of false gods.

Ha'azinu is an important example of Biblical poetry. Even the way the words of the *Parshah* are physically arranged in the Torah demonstrates the unique form of Moses' words, and how both the delivery as well as the imagery is different than what we have experienced throughout the book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy).

After completing his song, Moses urged the people to observe the words of the Torah, so that their days would be prolonged in the Land they were about to possess. On the same day, G-d commanded Moses to ascend Mount Nebo, where he would die, as Aaron, his brother, had died on Mount Hor. From Nebo, Moses would see the Land but, because of his sin by the waters of *Meribat Kadesh*, he would not enter it with the Children of Israel.

This Shabbat is *Shabbat Shuvah*, the special name for the Shabbat that falls between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The name is derived from the opening verse of the Haftarah "*Shuvah Yisrael ad Hashem Elohecha ...*" ("Return O Israel to the Lord your G-d" ... Hosea 14:2).



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