

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry. I suggest our partners pray on October 13 through 19) for Dr. Reinaldo Sequiera, Assistant to the WJ AFC, and leader of the Jewish Adventist ministries in the territory of the South American Division. Let's pray for him, Deborah, his wife and the ministry in this big region of South America.

NEWS

CHAG SUKKOT SAMEACH
HAPPY FEAST OF SUKKOT

NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

We continue to receive news from the Jewish Adventist congregation of all over the world. This week we have received news from Barzil and New Zealand.

ROSH HASHANAH IN WELLINGTON, NZ

Even though we have not received any picture from New Zealand, Stephanie and Brian sent us this news: "We finished of the last day of September celebrating Rosh Hashanah. Due to bad weather we brought the Tashlich service indoors. It is customary for Jewish people to go to the sea or a river on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah and throw breadcrumbs into the water as a visual representation of casting their sins upon the water and the L-rd burying their sins in the depth of the sea. This is a time of deep personal reflection and although this celebration was inside it was no different. There was a real sense of the L-rd's presence as people spent time reflecting on the past year and looking forward to what they can do better in the coming year. After the ceremony where people wrote their sins down on rice papers we had a prayer time asking Yeshua for the forgiveness of our sins, the blowing of the shofar to usher in a New Year and enjoying apples dipped in honey for a sweet New Year. We cast the bucket of water with everyone's rice papers into the sea on the way home.



Florianopolis

We were happy to see Jewish friends attending to the celebrations and who felt very welcomed



Sao Paulo

ROSH HASHANAH IN BRAZIL

Carlos sent us this news from Brazil: "The seven Brazilian Beth B'nei T sion congregations (Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Florianópolis and São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Campinas and Manaus) celebrated Rosh Hashaná with faith.

Belo Horizonte



Curitiba

Don't hesitate to send us interesting stories for our newsletter

Dutch Edition:
Hubert Paulleta

English Edition:
Richard-Amram Elofer

French Edition:
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German Edition:
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PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

HAAZINU

הָאֲזִינוּ

PARASHA OVERVIEW: DEUTERONOMY 32

Almost all of parasha Ha'azinu is a song or poem written in two parallel columns. Moshe summons the heavens and the earth to stand as eternal witnesses to what will happen if the Jewish people sin and do not obey the Torah.

Moshe reminds the people to examine the history of the world, noting how the Jewish people are rescued from obliteration in each generation—that G-d “pulls the strings” of world events so that Bnei Yisrael (Children of Israel) can fulfill their destiny as His messengers in the world.

G-d's kindness is so great that Yisrael 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 the morals of the people. They worship empty idols and pow-

erless gods, and indulge in all kinds of depravity.

G-d will then let nations with no moral worth subjugate Yisrael and scatter them across the world. However, the only 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 Yisrael, G-d will remind them that they are no more than a tool to do His will. The purpose of the Jewish people is fundamental—that man should know his Creator.

Neither exile nor suffering can sever the bond between G-d and His people, and eventually in the final redemption this closeness will be restored.

G-d will then turn His anger against the enemies of Yisrael, as though they were His enemies, showing no mercy to the tormentors of His people.

G-d then gives His last commandment to Moshe, that he should ascend Mount Nebo and be gathered there to his people.

HAAZINU, PARASHA'S TITLE

Parashat Haazinu is a song that Moshe wrote just before his death. The writing of this song was ordered by G-d in this way: “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Yisraelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for Me against them” (Deuteronomy 31:19). This song is called “Haazinu” which comes from the word “ozen” or “ear.” Moshe begins with: “Haazinu (Give ear), O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth” (Deuteronomy 32:1). Whenever someone says “song,” most people automatically think “music.” This song is one of the oldest examples of Jewish music in the Bible. Before this one, we had the song of Moshe and Miryam in Exodus 15. Rabbi Mendel Kalmenson describes the difference between a sermon and a song: “A song, conversely, denotes deep expression, genuine delight, and inner identification. The tune of a song bursts forth spontaneously; the precise wording of a sermon is carefully prepared. A song can be sung time and again. A sermon, on the other hand, can barely be listened to more than once. Words are the building blocks of language; like a vehicle, they shuttle ideas between minds and hearts. Music, on the other hand, is both the soul of language and the language of the soul, able to cross vast gulfs of ideology, culture, nationality, and personality.” Songs are the best cross-cultural language. That is why we should be very careful about the music we *ha'azinu* (hear/listen to). We should teach our children to choose their music carefully. Rabbi Johanan says in the Talmud, “This song, *Ha'azinu*, was sung every week as the additional offering of *Shabbat* afternoon was brought into the sanctuary and the Temple.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Torah states poetically: “My teaching shall drop as the rain; My speech shall condense as the dew, As the small rain on the tender grass, As the showers on the herb.” (Deut 32:2). Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, the former *Rosh Hayeshiva* of the *Mir Yeshiva*, cites the *Vilna Gaon* that rain helps things grow, but only from what is already planted. If someone has planted vegetables or fruits, rain will help them develop. However, if there are poisonous mushrooms planted, rain will help them grow as well. Similarly, Torah study makes one grow. However, it depends on one's character traits as to how he will develop. A person who has elevated traits will become a greatly elevated person; a person who has faulty character traits such as arrogance, selfishness or cruelty can become a real menace to others.

Water is the source of all life, and nothing can grow without rain that is given by G-d. That is why, in the Bible,



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rain is a metaphor for several of G-d's gifts, the power of G-d through His Word and His Spirit.

1) Torah is compared spiritually to the physical rain that falls on the earth, and the growth of plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables is compared to man himself. In the Bible, man is compared to a tree (Psalm 1:3). The difference, of course, is that man grows both physically and spiritually! If a person abandons Torah study for extended periods, it is compared to planting a seed and constantly uprooting it. Such a plant will never grow!

2) Not only is G-d's Word compared to spiritual rain, the *Ruach Hakodesh* (Holy Spirit) is also compared to spiritual rain. The prophet Joel says “Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in *Hashem*, your G-d; for He gives you the former rain in just measure, and He causes the rain to come down for you, the former rain and the latter rain, as before” (Joel 2:23). A few verses later we read, “It will happen afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. And also on the servants and on the handmaids in those days, I will pour out my Spirit.” (Joel 2:28-29). Joel also asks G-d's people to blow the shofar, which means to call G-d's people to repentance in order to receive these blessings from G-d.

Moshe, who wrote this song and who lived in a desert with very little rainfall, knew that water is a vital component of life. Rain clouds are vehicles for bringing water across the planet to places that otherwise would not have access to water. When rain falls on trees and plants, increased growth is not noticed immediately – it takes time for the rain to have a visible effect. Likewise, when we give admonition to others or we make efforts to change ourselves, improvement is often not immediately noticeable. We should not despair or give up hope – every effort has an impact, just as every raindrop has an impact. If we keep trying, then, G-d willing, our efforts will bloom! Likely this is why Moshe chose rain as the metaphor for his teachings.

Through this metaphor of the rain and water, G-d wants to teach His people about His blessings to them. After 40 years in the wilderness, the people of Yisrael will learn that the best illustration of these blessings is the land of Yisrael, because this land can be a land

“When I proclaim G-d's name, praise G-d for His greatness. The deeds of the Mighty One are perfect, for all His ways are just. He is a faithful G-d, never unfair; righteous and moral is He.” (Deuteronomy 32:3,4)

of abundance (milk and honey) but also a land of dryness and a desert – everything depends on the rain. Those who live in Yisrael know the importance of rain. Yisrael receives the last spring rain around the feast of *Pesach* and the first autumn rain around the feast of *Sukkot*. That means the country is without rain, not one drop, for about 6 months. It is obvious that if Yisrael doesn't receive rain on time, the entire country is in trouble. That is why rain became, in the writings of the prophets, the metaphor of spiritual blessings through G-d's Spirit. Just as G-d sends rain in due time over the land of Yisrael, He sends His spirit over His people to bless them and to give them spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

G-D IS OUR ROCK

Moshe has written a song of comfort for his people saying: “The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A G-d of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.” (Deuteronomy 32:4). Our righteous G-d is just and upright, compared to a “rock” that we can count on at every moment of our life. This “rock” reminded Yisrael of the rock that gave them water: “So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle” (Numbers 20:8). In a poetic way, Moshe says that Yisrael also received food from this “rock”: “He suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock” (Deuteronomy 32:13). Comparing G-d to a rock reminds us the words of King David: “The L-RD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my G-d, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; You save me from violence” (2 Samuel 22:2-3). This experience of David can be the experience of each believer who relies on the L-rd as his Master and G-d.

“Remember days long gone by. Ponder the years of each generation. Ask your father and let him tell you, and your grandfather, who will explain it.” (Deuteronomy 32:7)

A TIME FOR JOY

The Torah tells us about *Sukkot*: “The feast of *Sukkot* you shall keep seven days when you have gathered in from your threshing floor and from your wine press. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your man servant and your maid servant and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow that are within your gates. Seven days you shall keep a feast unto the L-rd your G-d in the place which the L-rd shall choose; because the L-rd your G-d will bless.” (Deut. 16:13-15).

Threetimes the Torah commands us to be joyful and rejoice during *Sukkot*. This explains why, more than other holiday, *Sukkot* is called *Zman Simchateinu*, “the season of our rejoicing.” This is especially true because *Sukkot* is celebrated after the harvest, when Yisrael can truly rejoice in G-d's blessings.

Our sages find a deeper meaning as to why *Sukkot* is called the most joyous holiday. *Sukkot* comes soon after *Yom Kippur*—the Day of Atonement. Thus, Jews celebrate the *Sukkot* holiday as spiritual equals—completely free of spiritual imperfections. They have been cleansed by G-d, and this calls for great rejoicing.

SUKKOT READINGS

1st Day: October 14

Leviticus 22:26-23:44

Numbers 29:12-16

Haftarah: Zechariah 14:1-21

2nd Day: October 15

Leviticus 22:26-23:44

Numbers 29:12-19

Haftarah: 1 Kings 8:2-21

3rd Day: October 16

Numbers 29:17-22

4th Day: October 17

Numbers 29:20-28

5th Day: October 18

Numbers 29:23-31

Shabbat: October 19

Exodus 33:12-34:26

Haftarah: Ezekiel 38:18-39:16

7th Day: October 20

Numbers 29:26-34

8th Day, Shemini Azeret: October 21

Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17

Numbers 29:35-30:1

Haftarah: 1 Kings 8:54-9:1

9th Day, Simchat Torah: October 22

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Numbers 29:35-30:1

Haftarah: Joshua 1:1-18



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APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

MARK 9:14-32

The portion of the *Besorah* of Mark for this week is interesting and also has some parallels with the text of the *parasha* that is read just after *Yom Kippur*. This story narrates an act of healing by Yeshua among unbelieving people. The case begins as a failure for everyone, common people and disciples as well. “When they came to the disciples, they saw a big crowd around them and the Torah scholars arguing with them” (Mark 9:14). The “they” of this text is Yeshua and the three *talmidim* who had been up on the mountain. Down at the foot of the mountain, the other nine disciples were waiting for them. It has now been two years that Yeshua and his disciples have been touring the country of Yisrael, and people recognized them as the disciples of this new rabbi, Yeshua of Nazareth. People thought the disciples possessed the same healing powers as their master and could heal sick people. As soon as the people recognized these disciples, they brought a sick person to them to be healed, but the disciples were not able to heal him. By the time Yeshua and the three *talmidim* reached the bottom of the mountain, a large crowd had gathered and the scribes and Pharisees were there arguing with the disciples. Then the crowd saw Yeshua and recognized him: “Suddenly, when the whole crowd saw Yeshua, they were amazed and began running to greet Him” (9:15). Immediately, Yeshua wanted to know the reason for this animated discussion: “He questioned them, ‘What are you arguing about with them?’” (9:16). A man said, “Rabbi, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” (9:17-18). Yeshua has a very strong reaction, saying: “O unbelieving generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?” (9:19). This strong reaction is because Yeshua wanted to see his disciples accomplish great things in his name – at the end of the *Besorah* he will say to the believers: “These signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak new languages; they will handle snakes; and if they drink anything deadly, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well.” (Mark 16:17-18). It is clearly the intention of Yeshua that his disciples would “drive out demons,” “speak new languages,” “lay hands on the sick, and they will get well.” But right now the disciples were not yet ready for this ministry. Yeshua asked to see the sick boy: “And answering them, He said, ‘Oh faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me.’” (Mark 9:19). It is interesting to see how the demon in the boy recognized Yeshua: “They brought the boy to Yeshua. When the spirit saw Him, immediately it threw the boy into a convulsion. The boy fell to the ground and began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.” (9:20). Yeshua asked the father: “‘How long has this been happening to him?’” (9:21a), and the father answered, “‘Since he was a child,’ the man answered. ‘It has often thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion and help us!’” (9:21-22).

For two years Yeshua has been with his disciples, ministering among G-d’s people in their presence, and yet they are not able to

continue Yeshua’s ministry without him.

In the *parasha*, Moshe continues to give his last words to Yisrael, this time through a song or poem called *Ha’azinu*. In this song he requests *Hashamayim* (the Heavens) and *Haaretz* (the earth) to be witnesses to the covenant G-d has made with His people. “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak! Let the earth hear the words of my mouth” (Deuteronomy 32:1). Moshe proclaims and blesses the name of *Hashem* (32:2), affirming His kindness (32:4). Yisrael has been unfaithful (32:5-6). It is a painful history – after 40 years in the wilderness, 40 years of proximity with G-d, they still have difficulty believing. This story in the *Besorah* of Mark is also painful for Yeshua who has been with his people for many years, who worked in close proximity with his disciples, feeding them, healing them, teaching them and still they are unbelieving and not able to perform the same miracles as Yeshua.

This text is read just after *Yom Kippur*, after the great Day of Atonement for Yisrael, and what greater example of atonement than this story of a boy who was held captive by the devil— *HaSatan*— for such a long time and is now released and healed.

How did Yisrael receive forgiveness and atonement on *Yom Kippur*? Essentially through repentance, contrition, confession and prayers, and here is what Yeshua would like to underline in this story. What was the problem? Why could not the disciples heal this boy? Yeshua says it is for two reasons: First their lack of faith. The father says “If you can,” and Yeshua stressed his sentence: “If You can?” (Mark 9:23a). “All things can be done for the one who believes” (9:23b). The second reason is their lack of prayer: “This kind can come out only through prayer.” (Mark 9:29). Forgiveness and victory over the devil is possible only by faith and prayer, exactly what was required of the Jewish people on *Yom Kippur*. Of course at that time there were also sacrifices, but those sacrifices had no value without a true spirit of repentance and prayer from Yisrael.

For the first time, the father understood his lack of faith and exclaimed to Yeshua: “Immediately the father of the child cried out, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’” (9:24). Yeshua is satisfied. This man realizes that his faith is deficient, he would like to have faith, but his faith is so small that he begs Yeshua to strengthen his faith. Then the miracle is possible: “He rebuked the unclean spirit, telling it, ‘I command you, deaf and mute spirit, come out of him and do not ever enter him again!’... Yeshua took him by the hand and lifted him, and the boy stood up.” (9:25-27). The disciples were astonished that they could not heal this young boy, but Yeshua did.

The disciples did not say anything until they entered the house. There, they came to Yeshua and asked him “Why could we not cast it out?” (9:28). “He said to them, ‘This kind cannot come out except by prayer.’” (9:29). Do we want to see miracles in our life? Yeshua said: “only by prayer.” Do we want to see members of our family coming to Yeshua? Yeshua said: “only by prayer.” Do we want to see more justice in this world? Yeshua said: “only by prayer.” Do we want to see Jerusalem in peace? Yeshua said: “only by prayer.” Do we want to see Israel coming to G-d? Yeshua said: “only by prayer.” Do we want to see our Jewish friend coming to Yeshua? Yeshua said: “only by prayer.”

HAFTARAH

HOSEA 14:2 -10;

JOEL 2:15 - 27

MICAH 7:18 - 20

On this special Shabbat before Sukkoth (Feast of the Tabernacles) Israel is going to read three texts for the Haftara, not only one.

The text of Hosea is a call to come back to the L-rd, we are still in the context of Teshuva (repentance and confession). “Take words with you and return to the L-rd; say to him, ‘Take away all guilt; accept that which is good, and we will offer the fruit of our lips.’” (Hos. 14:2). Israel has understood that sacrifices of animal are not always pleasing the L-rd. What Hashem wants from us is much more the fruits of our lips that means praises, hallel, and prayers.

The prophet Joel is much more in the context of calling to repentance, with the shofar as it is blown on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation;” (Joel 2:15-16). Israel has just gathered in a solemn assembly for Rosh Hashana and Kippur, however the prophet says to Israel that it is not enough. On Yom Kippur Israel repented and confessed their sins, however, this coming back to the L-rd cannot be only on one day a year, it should be done every day of the year. Then Rosh hashana and Kippur still have all their significance even though they are already passed.

If Israel is faithful that way, the L-rd will bless her “In response to his people the L-rd said: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a mockery among the nations.” (Joel 2:19).

The last text from Micah is a recognition from Israel that the L-rd has forgiven her sins. “Who is a G-d like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and unswerving loyalty to Abraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors from the days of old.” (Mic. 7:18-20). This text mentions Jacob, reminding us of the promise given at Bethel; Abraham is also mentioned, and we recall his kindness and love for people. The compassions of G-d are not about or on account of the good deeds of the prophet’s contemporaries. The compassions of G-d are always in reference to the patriarchs and their merits – not because they were better, but in their time they were the few who followed the true G-d. They trusted Him even though they were alone in their generation – that is the reason the text refers to the promises “to our ancestors from the days of old.” White affirms: “God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, in unbroken line, had preserved from age to age the precious revealings of His will... Faithful among the faithless, uncorrupted by the prevailing apostasy, [Abraham] steadfastly adhered to the worship of the one true God.” (PP, 125). What a wonderful G-d who repeats His promises to His people and helps them to start a new year full of confidence in Him!

I love our G-d for his mercy upon His people. It is always a special experience to discover how much G-d Loves His people.

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

G-D’S NAME

Somebody once counted how many times he said G-d’s name over the course of one day. Between prayers in the synagogue, blessings over food, and Torah study, he pronounced G-d’s name 900 times in one day! Figured over a lifetime, that’s about 25 million chances to give proper honor and respect to G-d!

The Almighty does so much for us, every moment of every day. We should give Him our full respect and honor, as it says in this *parasha*: “For I will proclaim the name of the L-RD; ascribe greatness to our G-d!” (Deuteronomy 32:3).

THINGS GOOD FOR YOU

The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, once asked someone how things were going for him. Replied the man, “It would not hurt if things were a bit better.” “How can you possibly know that it wouldn’t hurt?” Responded the Chofetz Chaim. “The Almighty knows better than you. He is merciful and compassionate. If He felt it would be good for you for things to be better, He definitely would have made them better. Certainly things are good for you the way they are.”

RETURNING TO G-D

Rabbi Kamenetzky says that Rabbi Berel Wein was once waiting for a late Maariv (evening) service in a small house of worship in an old cranny in the Shaarei Chesed section of Jerusalem. Joining the minyan was none other than Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, one of the most beloved Torah scholars of our

“Like an eagle
arousing its
nest, hovering
over its young,
He spread His
wings and took
them, carrying
them on His
pinions.”

(Deuteronomy 32:11)

generation, whose Halachic rulings guided thousands of people.

The hour was late and Rabbi Wein noticed an American tourist agitated at the delay of services. Looking at his watch, Rabbi Wein noticed it was 9:35. Maariv was to have started five minutes ago. The tourist approached a few of the men with a look on his face that spelled, “Nu?!” Rabbi Auerbach held up his hand and said, “Reb Yissachar the street cleaner has not arrived.” “Rebbe,” the man approached, “who are we waiting for? It is already five minutes late and I have to get back to my hotel? Why are we waiting for a mere street cleaner?”

“You don’t understand,” came the reply. “Did you ever see him pick up the refuse? His sole intent is to beautify the streets of Jerusalem. When he removes obstructions he does it only to make sure the pedestrians do not get hurt. He is no ordinary street cleaner — he cleans the streets l’shaim shamayim, for the sake of heaven.” Rabbi Auerbach paused. “I wish I would have the same l’shaim shamayim in my job as he has in his.”

IF THE WORLD KNEW...

While we had our two Temples in Jerusalem, during the Festival of Succot 70 offerings were made for the nations of the world — so that the Almighty would provide rain for their crops. The Talmud tells us that if the nations of the world understood the value of what the Jewish people provided them, they would have sent their armies to defend our Temple in Jerusalem to keep it from being destroyed.

INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

If it was essential for Moses to embody the commandments in sacred song, so that as they marched in the wilderness, the children could learn to sing the law verse by verse, how essential it is at this time to teach our children God’s Word! Let us come up to the help of the Lord, instructing our children to keep the commandments to the letter. Let us do everything in our power to make music in our homes, that God may come in. (Ev 500)