

Parashat Haazinu

Deuteronomy 32:1-33:29

OCTOBER 11, 2019



SUMMARY

Ha'azinu is the second-to-last Torah portion and almost the whole thing is a song or poem that Moshe recites to the Israelites. The poem reminds us of God's justice and patience even when Israel does things that are wrong. The words of the poem are written in the Torah scroll two columns.

Moshe also tells the Israelites to remember their history and their connections--through their families--with God. After Moshe recites the poem God tells Moshe to go up on top of Mount Nebo so Moshe can see the land of Israel--even though God will not let him enter it.

From Our Commentators:

Rashi--

יערף כמטר לקחי . . .
שָׁאֲנִי אֹמֵר בְּפִנְיֵכֶם
תּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּתְּתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
שֶׁהִיא חַיִּים לְעוֹלָם בְּמִטָּר
זֶה שֶׁהוּא חַיִּים לְעוֹלָם
(עי' ספרי); בְּאֶשֶׁר יַעֲרֹפוּ
הַשָּׁמַיִם טַל וּמָטָר
... I declare that the
Torah which I gave to
Israel (לקחי) is life to the
world as the rain which is
life to the world (cf. Sifrei
Devarim 306:17) — even
as the heavens drop
down dew and rain.

For Discussion:

1) Moshe begins some of his last words of inspiration and guidance--in the form of a poem--by saying:

הָאָזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־יְיָ:

Give ear, heavens, and I will speak;

Listen, land, to the sayings of my mouth.

Why might Moshe begin this way? Why ask the heavens and earth to hear instead of saying, *Shema Yisrael*, or something like that?

2) After Moshe asks for attention, the next thing he does is ask for G!d's help with his words, saying, "Let my teaching drip like rain, let my words flow like dew, like droplets on new-growth, like showers on grass." He talks a lot about water. Why do you think he would compare his words to water--asking for them to drip like rain, flow like dew, be like droplets on new growth and like showers on grass?

3) How can Torah be like water?