



ג' - ח' תשרי תשפ"ז

September 14-19, 2026



מה בפַּרְשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Most of Ha'azinu is a שִׁירָה (shira, song or poem), delivered by Moshe to Benei Yisrael.
- Moshe asks the heavens and the earth to listen to his words. He prays that his words will be as sweet as rain.
- God is described as a Rock, with perfect actions.
- Throughout time, Benei Yisrael must learn about their past from their elders.
- The shira tells a story. God finds Benei Yisrael in wild lands and cares for all their needs with kindness and affection.
- But Benei Yisrael forget about God, and they worship idols.
- God punishes Benei Yisrael with many bad things: famine, plague, beasts, and war.
- God will also punish the enemies of Benei Yisrael and ultimately save us.
- The Torah is our lifeforce.
- God tells Moshe to go to the top of Har Nevo so he can look at Eretz Yisrael before he dies.





פֶּשֶׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

Devarim 32:10

God found them in a wilderness,
in an empty howling wasteland.
God surrounded them and watched over them,
guarded them as the pupil of God's eye.

דברים לב:י

מִצָּאָהוּ בְּאַרְץ מִדְבָּר
וּבְתֹהוּ לֵל לְשֹׁמֵן
יִסְבְּבֵנָהּ יְבוֹנֵנָהּ
לְעֵרְנָהּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו:

- ◆ Parallelism means saying the same idea twice, with different words. This pasuk contains a few examples of parallelism. What are they? Why might it be important to say the same thing twice?
- ◆ The pasuk describes the desert as "an empty howling waste." Is this how you imagine the desert? How does this description relate to the story of Benei Yisrael being saved from Egypt and led through the desert? How does it help you understand Benei Yisrael's experience of that story?
- ◆ What does it mean to guard someone "like the pupil of your eye"? What does this comparison tell us about God's relationship with Benei Yisrael?
- ◆ Can you imagine being surrounded by God? What would that be like?



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

The Torah says that our relationship with God is like the relationship between a parent and a child. This appears a number of times in our parashah (like in verses 5, 18, 19, and 20). Just a few weeks ago, Parashat Re'eh also says: **אַתֶּם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּנִים** (you are children of God your Lord; Devarim 14:1).

The rabbis wondered about the idea of being God's children. They were curious to know:





If we don't **act** like God's children (by not following the mitzvot), are we still considered God's children?

Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 36a

"You are children of God your Lord" – When you act like children, you're called children. But when you don't act like children, you aren't called children. This is what R. Yehudah says.

R. Meir says: Either way you're called children, as it says... "children with no loyalty in them" (Devarim 32:20).

תלמוד בבלי מסכת קידושין דף לו עמוד א

"בְּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם" – בְּזִמְנוֹ שְׂאִתֶּם נוֹהֲגִים מִנְהַג בְּנִים אַתֶּם קְרוּיִם בְּנִים. אִין אַתֶּם נוֹהֲגִים מִנְהַג בְּנִים, אִין אַתֶּם קְרוּיִם בְּנִים. דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה.

רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר בֵּין כֹּד וּבֵין כֹּד אַתֶּם קְרוּיִם בְּנִים שְׂנַאֲמַר... "בְּנִים לֹא אֱמֹן בָּם" (דְּבָרִים לִב:כ).

R. Yehudah thinks we're only called children of God when we act like it.

R. Meir disagrees and uses a pasuk from our parashah to prove it. Part of Ha'azinu describes what happens when Benei Yisrael ignore the Torah and mitzvot:



Devarim 32:20

God said: I will hide My face from them, and see how they end up. For they are a disobedient generation, **children with no loyalty in them.**

דברים לב:כ

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱסֹתֶינָהּ פָּנַי מֵהֶם
אֶרְאֶה מָה אַחֲרֵיתָם
כִּי דֹר תִּהְיֶכֶת הֵמָּה
בְּנִים לֹא אֱמֹן בָּם:

R. Meir is noticing something about this pasuk: The Torah says that Benei Yisrael are not obedient or loyal but still calls them God's children! R. Meir also quotes other pesukim from the Tanakh to prove his point.

- ♦ Can you try to make an argument for each side?
- ♦ In what ways is our relationship with God similar to a relationship with a parent? How can this comparison help you better relate to God?



In disagreements between R. Yehudah and R. Meir, we usually follow the opinion of R. Yehudah. But the Rashba (750 years ago) wrote that, in this debate, we side with R. Meir (Shut HaRashba 1:194).

- ♦ In a halakhic debate, we choose a winner because we need to decide what to do or not do. But this debate is philosophical, not practical. Why do you think it's important for there to be a "winner" for this debate?



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

Our parashah describes the painful possibility of הֶסְתֵּר פָּנִים (hester panim, God's face being hidden). What is this? It's not hide and seek. It's the idea of God being distant from us and hiding or turning away from us. Being face-to-face with someone implies being close to them and having them in your life. Hester panim is the opposite of that.

Hazal say that we live in a time of hester panim from God. One example of this is that there are almost no obvious miracles in our world anymore like there were in the times of the Torah.

Here's how R. Yaakov bar Abba (in the name of R. Aha) felt about hester panim and distance from God:



Bereishit Rabbah 42:3

There is no time as difficult as the time described by God's statement that "I will hide My face from you at that time" (Devarim 31:18).

בראשית רבה מב:ג

אין לך שעה קשה כְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה
שֶׁכָּתוּב בָּהּ: וְאֵנֹכִי הִסְתֵּר אֶסְתִּיר פָּנַי
בְּעֵת הַהִיא (דְּבָרִים ל"א:יח).

- ♦ Why do you think R. Yaakov felt this way about hester panim?
- ♦ How does it feel to be far away from someone you love? How does it feel to be close?
- ♦ Do you ever feel like you want to be far away from someone? Why? What would make God feel like it's best to be far away from us?
- ♦ What would be different about our lives if we didn't live in a time of hester panim?



דְּקָה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Debate: The heavens and the earth are excellent witnesses.

How to play:

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.



AGREE!



Agree!

- ♦ You can't hide anything from the heavens and the earth. No matter where you go, there they are.
- ♦ They've been around for a while and have seen a lot, so they're probably pretty trustworthy.



Disagree!

- ♦ It's enough for God to watch us. I don't need the sky and earth looking over my shoulder too!
- ♦ I'd rather self-report. Honor system all the way.
- ♦ What if I become an astronaut and go to the moon? How will the sky and earth watch me then?



שאלות השבוע • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. **The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.**

aliyot:

- 1) Devarim 32:1 to 32:6
- 2) 32:7 to 32:12
- 3) 32:13 to 32:18
- 4) 32:19 to 32:28
- 5) 32:29 to 32:39
- 6) 32:40 to 32:43
- 7) 32:44 to 32:52

haftarah for Shabbat

Shuva: Hoshea 14:2 to 14:10 and Micah 7:18 to 7:20 for Sefaradim; Hoshea 14:2 to 14:10 and Yoel 2:15 to 2:27 for Ashkenazim

Good luck!

1 Who or what is asked to listen?

2 Where did God find Benei Yisrael?



3 What food has blood?

4 How many times does the root כ.ע.ב (referring to anger) appear in this aliyah?

5 How do the grapes from Sedom and Amarah taste?

6 What are God's weapons?



7 Who will Moshe die like?

8 What letter is smaller than all the others in our parashah?

9 What letter is bigger than all the others in our parashah?

10 **From the haftarah:** What plants appear in the part that's from the book of Hoshea?



*
Look for the answers on page 12!



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

In Ha'azinu, Moshe calls God a "Tzur" a few times, such as here:

Devarim 32:4

The Tzur, Whose actions are perfect

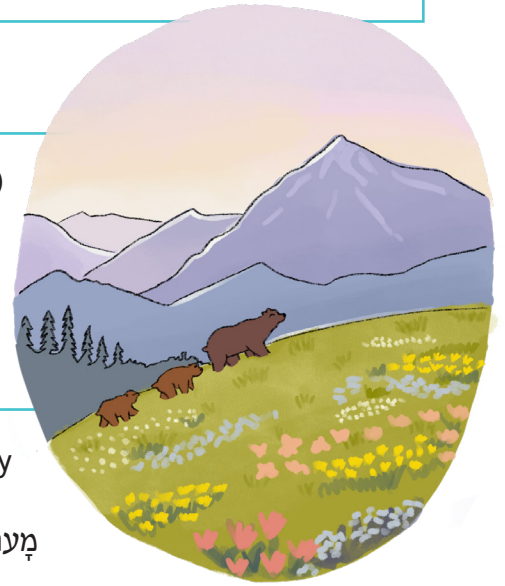
דברים לב:ד

הַצּוֹר תְּמִים פְּעָלוֹ

What does it mean for God to be a "Tzur"?

R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (Germany, 150 years ago)

..."tzur" in its ordinary meaning of "rock" offers the natural image of the solid, strong, unchanging, and invincible, and therefore the expression of the strongest and most reliable support and protection...



R. Hirsch unpacks the idea that God is a "Rock." This is typically how we understand "tzur" when we call God צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל (Tzur Yisrael, the Rock of Israel) in Shoharim, and when we sing מְעוֹז צוֹר (Ma'oz Tzur, Rock of Ages) on Hanukkah.

- How does the idea that God is a Rock affect how you might relate to God? In what ways does God protect us and support us? How is God unchanging and invincible?

העמק דבר

הַצּוֹר - מְשַׁמְעוֹ הַיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל.

Ha'amek Davar (Germany, 150 years ago)

"Tzur" means "the Creator" (yotzer) of everything.



Ha'amek Davar relates "Tzur" to the שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) ל.צ.ר (to form). This is how we describe God in Shaharit in the berakhah יוֹצֵר אֹר (Yotzeir Or, the One Who creates light).

- ♦ How does the idea that God is a creator affect how you might relate to God?
- ♦ Go back to the pasuk. What word there suggests the word Tzur might be about creation?



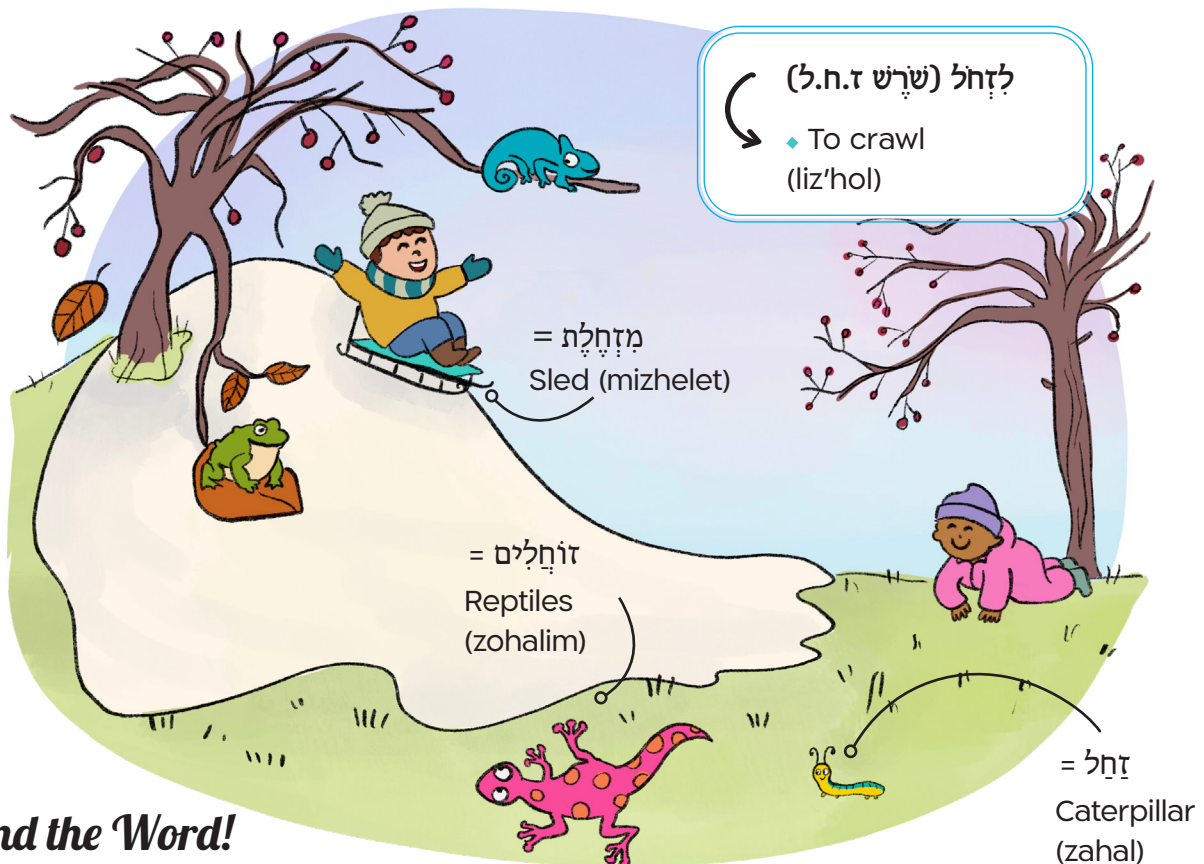
• A Moment of Hebrew • רגע של עברית

Devarim 32:24

Wasting famine, ravaging plague, deadly pestilence, and fanged beasts I will let loose against them, with poisonous **creepers** in dust.

דברים לב:כד

מִזִּי רָעַב וּלְחָמִי רָשָׁף וְקָטַב
מִרִּירִי וְשׁוֹן בְּהֵמַת אֲשַׁלַּח בָּם עִם
חֲמַת זֹחָלִי עֶפְרָ:



Find the Word!

Guess what? You won't find this שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) anywhere else in Tanakh. This is the only place it appears! Pretty cool, right?!



תּפִלָּה • Prayer in the Parashah

In Ha'azinu, God describes God's own power:

Devarim 32:39

I cause death and life

דברים לב:לט

אֲנִי אֶמִית וְאֶחֱיָה

We echo this line in the second בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) of the Amidah, when we describe God as מֶלֶךְ מָמִית וּמַחְיָה (the King who causes death and life).

When we say this berakhah, what exactly are we talking about?

The berakhah contains a few examples.:



סוּמָךְ נוֹפְלִים

Supporting people who are stumbling



רוֹפֵא חוֹלִים

Healing sick people



מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים

Releasing captives

— מְחִיָּה הַמֵּתִים - Bringing the dead back to life

Do you notice a common idea here? How does each example relate to all the other ones?

It seems that this berakhah is talking about bad situations that are turned around and made better. This can be very extreme - like someone having already died and being brought back to life (which is probably talking about the future when mashiah comes). But it also happens in simpler ways, like when someone is in captivity but God helps free them, or when someone is sick but God helps heal them, or when someone falls but God helps them to get back up.

According to this berakhah, the pasuk does not just mean that God both causes death and also causes life, but that God can take a situation of death (or sickness or falling) and turn it around to life (or healing or getting back up).

This can even apply to God helping someone who's asleep to wake up!

Talmud Yerushalmi Berakhot 4:1

The school of R. Yannai said: One who wakes from sleep must say: Blessed are You, God, who gives life to the dead.

תלמוד ירושלמי (ונציה) מסכת ברכות פרק ד דף ז

דְּבִית ר' יַנַּאי אָמְרִין הַנוֹעֵר מִשְׁנָתוֹ צָרִיד לֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מַחְיֶה הַמֵּתִים.

- ♦ How is getting better from being sick like coming back to life?
- ♦ How is waking up in the morning like coming back to life?
- ♦ What do you think about when you call God the One Who gives life?
- ♦ This berakhah in the Amidah is also where we pray for rain (see Halakhah, below)! What's the connection to coming back to life? What does rain help to come back to life?



הלכה • Halakhah

In tefillah, one of the things we often pray for is rain. According to R. Jacob ben Asher (Spain, 700 years ago), the idea of praying for rain comes from our parashah. He says it's based on two pesukim that are back-to-back: a pasuk all about rain, followed by a pasuk about calling out to God.



Devarim 32:2-3

May my words come down like rain,
my speech drip like dew,
like showers on young plants,
like droplets on the grass.

For the name of God I call out,
give glory to our Lord!

דברים לב:ב-ג

יֵעָרֵף כְּמָטָר לִקְחִי
תִּזְלַכַּ כְּטֶל אֲמֶרְתִּי
כְּשֹׁעִירִים עָלֵי דָשָׁא
וְכִרְבִּיבִים עָלֵי עֵשֶׂב:

כִּי שֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא
הָבוּ גִדְל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ:

During the winter months, when crops in Israel begin to grow,, we add two special lines to the Amidah asking God to make sure that there is enough rain.

- ◆ מְשִׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם (mashiv ha-ru'ah u-morid ha-geshem, "Who brings the wind and causes the rain to fall")
 - ◆ This line is inserted in the second בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) of the Amidah.
 - ◆ We say it beginning with Mussaf on Shemini Atzeret and ending at Shaharit on the first day of Pesah
- ◆ וַתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבִרְכָּה (ve-tein tal u-matar livrakhah, "send dew and rain for a blessing")
 - ◆ This line is inserted in the ninth berakhah of the weekday Amidah.
 - ◆ In Eretz Yisrael, people start to say it on the 7th of the month of Heshvan. In other parts of the world, people start to say it at Maariv on the night of December 4 or 5 (depending on whether it's a secular leap year).
 - ◆ In all places, we say ve-tein tal u-matar livrakhah until minhah on the day before Pesah.

What if you forget?

You might get used to saying the Amidah one way, and then when the season changes it can be hard to remember to add in the lines praying for rain.

According to the Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayyim 114:4; 117:4), if you forget to add either of these lines, and you've completed the Amidah, you should return to the beginning and start over. If you aren't sure if you said mashiv ha-ru'ah, then for the first 30 days after Shemini Atzeret, you should assume that you said it the old way, and repeat your Amidah. But after 30 days of doing it correctly, you can assume you've formed the correct habit, and you don't have to repeat the Amidah (Remah Orah Hayyim 114:8).

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. The heavens and the earth (32:1)
2. In the wilderness (32:10)
3. Grapes (32:14)
4. Four – מִכָּעַס (mika'as), כִּיעֲסוּנִי (ki'asuni), אֲכַעֲסֶם (akh'isem), כָּעַס (ka'as) (32:19,21,27)
5. Bitter (32:32)
6. Sword (32:41) and arrows (32:42)
7. Aharon (32:50)
8. The letter yud in הָשִׁי (32:18)
9. The first heh in הָלֵךְ (32:6)
10. Lily (Hoshea 14:6), tree of Lebanon (14:6), olive tree (14:7), grape vine (14:8), cypress tree (14:9)



בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

There's a custom to memorize the entire שִׁירָה (shira, song or poem) that's in our parashah!

This custom is based on a pasuk from last week's parashah:

Devarim 31:19

And now, write down this shira and teach it to Benei Yisrael; **put it in their mouths...**

דברים לא:יט

וַעֲתָה כְּתֹבוּ לָכֶם אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת וְלַמָּדָה
אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמָהּ בְּפִיהֶם...

Ibn Ezra explains that the words שְׁמָהּ (put it in their mouths) means that you should learn the shira by heart.

Try it!

Learn by heart the shira of Ha'azinu, or part of it... or any part of the Torah at all. Start with one pasuk, and see where it goes. What are your favorite strategies for memorizing? What's it like to know words of Torah so well you don't even have to look at them?

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאִדְבְּרָה וּתְשַׁמַּע הָאָרֶץ
אֲמַרְתִּי כִשְׁעִירִים עָלַי דְּשֵׁא וּכְרִבִּיבִים עָלַי
עֹשֶׁב

כִּי שֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא הִבּוּ גֹדֶל לִאֲלֹקֵינוּ הַצּוֹר
תַּמִּים פָּעִלוּ כִּי כָל דַּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט א-ל
אֲמוֹנָה וְאֵין עוֹל צָדִיק וִישֵׁר הוּא...

