



Parshas Haazinu 2023, His ways are just

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna. May all those who need experience a complete and speedy recovery with G-d's help.

The Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.

This week is Shabbos Shuvah, the Shabbos of Teshuva. Commencing with Rosh Hashanah, we embark on the Aseres Ymey Teshuva, the ten days dedicated to Teshuva, culminating in Yom Kippur.

We read a special Haftorah from Hoshea. It opens with the words from king Hoshea, **שובה ישראל עד ה אלקיך כי כשלת בעונך - Return, O Israel to the Lord your G-d, for you have stumbled with your sins.** Traditionally, rabbis across the globe will emphasize the importance of returning to G-d during their speeches this shabbos.

Most of our Torah portion is a profound song with lasting significance, it was sung by Moshe on the day he passed away. He calls the the heavens and earth as witnesses he reminds the nation that G-d is just and the source of all their blessings.

Moshe reiterates world history, starting with the Tower of Babylon, that G-d chose to spare the world instead of destroying it because of the Jewish nation. He reminds them how G-d enveloped them in heavenly clouds as they journeyed through the desert to the promised land.

He reveals their future, that they will settle in the land of Israel and receive all the blessings he spoke about earlier. But then they will rebel against G-d,

abandon His ways and stray from His path. Moshe assures the nation, that although they will receive punishment for their sins, G-d will not abandon them.

Once they return to Him, He will turn His wrath and anger against all those who inflicted pain on his nation. He will avenge all the blood spilled and retaliate against our enemies as we sing His praises to the world.

However, a question comes to mind: Moshe starts our Torah portion by calling upon the heaven and earth as witnesses, emphasizing that despite the challenges and suffering, G-d will ultimately redeem us and lead us back to the promised land. He uses many terms to describe G-d, His strength and power, one of these terms is "הַצִּיּוֹר - the rock," depicting G-d as the Rock whose deeds are flawless. Why does Moshe choose this word to convey G-d's supremacy?

The Rabbienu Bachya, Rav Bachya Ben Asher gives two explanations that should give us some perspective as we prepare for Yom Kippur. His simple answer is that Moshe uses the term "**The Rock**" to describe G-d's strength and toughness. Just as a rock serves as the solid foundation of the universe, so is G-d the cornerstone of our world.

But the Rabbienu Bachya's second explanation is truly deep and profound. He quotes his teacher the Rashba, Rav Shlomo Ben Avraham who suggests that הַצִּיּוֹר not only signifies a rock but also implies creator, builder, and designer.

This concept is reflected in the Pasuk from Shemos (32:4) describing Aaron's act of crafting the golden calf, which states, "וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַחֶרֶט - *and he molded it (the gold) into a cast.*"

The Rabbienu Bachya explains that Moshe's reference to "הַצִּיּוֹר" is referring to G-d's children, the Jewish nation. According to his interpretation, we must consider the entire phrase, "הַצִּיּוֹר תְּמִים פְּעֻלוֹ - *His creations were created perfectly.*" Despite the presence of sin, G-d's intention was for all His creations to be flawless, to follow in His ways, much like the angels do

But the Pasuk doesn't stop there. It goes on to say, "כִּי כָל-דַּרְכָיו מִשְׁפָּט - *all His ways are just.*" This means that even though G-d expects us to be perfect and pure, He

considers all the circumstances and makes decisions accordingly. He possesses qualities of mercy and compassion while also upholding justice and fairness.

The Rabbienu Bachya continues that it is no coincidence that Moshe uses these words on the day he passes away. The Parsha concludes with G-d telling Moshe to climb Mt. Nevo and view Israel from afar as he won't be entering the promised land.

Moshe Rabbeinu prayed 515 times to be granted entry into Israel, yet G-d's response remained firm: he would lead the nation to the threshold but not enter Israel. Therefore, Moshe addresses the people he guided for 40 years, saying, "כי כל־דרכיו משפט - **although we do not see nor do we understand, G-d's ways are just.**"

This profound lesson is ever more relevant as we quickly approach the holiest time of the year, Yom Kippur, the day of forgiveness. While we repent and seek G-d's forgiveness for our mistakes, we must also strive for the perfection He has instilled within us. We must follow the singular path He has set before us and become the beacon of light that our world desperately needs.

**“On Kol Nidre we recall the first Yom Kippur
when Moshe annulled the G-d’s vow,
letting His compassion override His justice,
the basis of all Divine forgiveness.”**

-Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Have a meaningful Shabbos Shuvah,

Rabbi Sholom Yemini