

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT HA'AZINU

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LET YOUR SOUL SING



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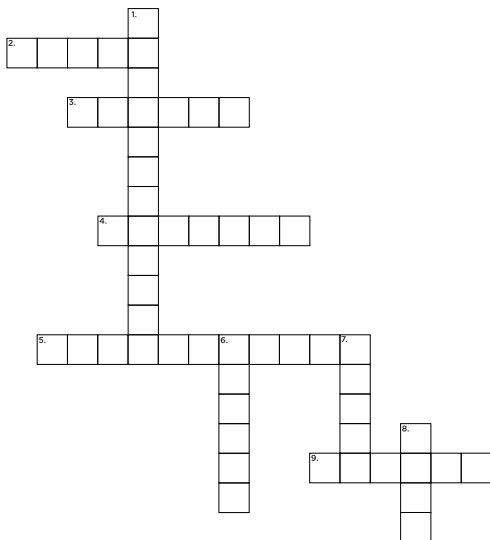
Parashat Ha'azinu is a long song recited by Moshe as we approached the land of Israel. It expresses our relationship to God and our future as a people, marking the end of his leadership of the Jewish people and the beginning of a new chapter in Jewish history. It is the last of three songs we find in the Torah – the other two mark miraculous events. First we have *Shirat Ha'yam* (Song of the Sea), sung by the Jewish people after

we emerged safely from the split sea, with our Egyptian pursuers vanquished. The second is *Shirat Ha'Be'er* (Song of the Well), a short song expressing gratitude to God after finding water in the desert.

Songs are a powerful tool; they take poetic words and a magical tune and combine them to create an emotional experience. In Judaism, we mark our special occasions with songs – at a wedding, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, making kiddush or even simply in shul on Shabbat! As Rabbi Sacks writes, "words are the language of the mind, but music is the language of the soul." With that in mind, let's go back into the *parasha*.

Ha'azinu is more than just a moral lesson about our relationship with God. Moshe is teaching us, and every generation, about our covenant with God and the difficult future we will face when we betray this covenant, with a message of consolation at the end. This blunt overview of Jewish destiny is conveyed with emotion through song. The Talmud (*Megilla* 32a) explains that song endures - it turns words into more than just ideas; it becomes a fundamental part of our lives, with memory, meaning and passion. This is a powerful way to interpret *Ha'azinu's* song of covenant - and really all of Torah – something to be sung, felt and experienced.

Parasha Crossword (Leave out all apostrophes)



Down:

1. The 2nd song in the Torah, celebrating finding water in the desert
6. The 1st witness to Moshe's words
7. Person who sang this final song
8. Rabbi Sacks said 'Music is the language of the ____'

Across:

2. The 2nd witness to Moshe's words
3. The land the Jewish people were about to enter
4. The *Parasha* that is written as a long song by Moshe
5. The 1st song in the Torah, sung after crossing the sea
9. Ha'azinu was written as a song to help it stay in people's ____