

The sound of music!

Hazinu – 5783/2022

There were two movies that we were allowed to watch as children, no matter how late they would come on, and no matter how late they would finish. The first was always around Pesach – we would watch The Ten Commandments. It would usually come on around 8:30 on Easter Sunday, and we would watch all 3 hours 40 minutes of it. The first time I watched it was when I was six years old, I remember because my mother was furious at my father, yet she acquiesced, with me promising to sleep in. I was able to last to 5am, but I was too excited to see Tanach come alive on screen. The second movie was the Sound of Music. It was a movie I loved for all time. First because it was the only movie, until I went to Israel for the year after high school, that had a hafsaka, a break. Secondly, because it speaks to the soul on so many levels, precisely because of its name, the sound of music.

There are numerous songs in Tanach.

Az Yashir, a song of celebration as the Jewish people left the shackles of Egypt¹.

Shirat Devorah, a song of celebration as the Jewish people engaging in decisive victory over Sisera².

Shir HaShirim, Shlomo's love song between the Jewish people and Hashem³.

Shirat Givon, the song of Joshua⁴.

Shirat Mashiach, the song Isaiah mentions that will follow the coming of the Mashiach⁵.

But none are as important as that of the song in this week's Parasha⁶. Sung by Moses to help assure the spiritual future of the Hebrews and included words of warning, of instruction, and of hope, and reaffirms G-d's care and love of the Jewish people in all circumstances. "Ha'azinu" reflects the vicissitudes of the present and future destiny of Israel, the ups and downs, the rises and the declines. It is not a testimony to the past, but rather a warning for the present and the future.

It was sung to a people who were mostly already born into physical freedom, so there was no need for the Hebrews to suddenly rejoice in song as at the Yam Suf, but rather, to listen and hear Moses in a restrained and dour manner.

The Ibn Ezra comments on the opening verse, describing the nature of a soul, and the connection it has to the world around, amplified through the power of the sound of music⁷.

Hazinu, that Parasha that nearly always falls in these Yamim Noraim, these days of awe, is a message befitting of its time.

We stand in holy moments, and we ourselves bridge the divide between the Almighty and the mortal world.

We stood on Yom Kippur mimicking the angels. Dressed in white, legs together for most of the day, reciting Unetaneh Tokef, Kedusha, and other prayer that repeat the various calls, roles, and actions of the angels. And now we stand listening to a song that wholly embodies the diametrically opposing worlds of shamayim and ha'aretz. Standing on this first Shabbat of our new lives, our clean slates, or pure future, ready to embrace the fact that we are here, and that we are imbued with holiness.

We don't know what the year will bring, we don't know whether we have been sealed for good, wealth, life or anything else until next Yom Kippur. So the only thing we can do is grasp that holiness, grasp that sound of music, that moment that enhances our souls, inspiring us to better ourselves, bridging that divide between heaven and earth, holy and profane, God and mankind.