



Likkutei Sichos

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A Song of Return

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

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¹ {In the original, “(Te)shuvah,” reflecting the two different names this Shabbos is customarily called: (a) Shabbos Teshuvah; and, (b) Shabbos Shuvah.}

1.

A SONG OF REBUKE?!

The *Haazinu* Song² was among the hymns customarily chanted by the Levites in the Temple during a sacrificial offering.³ As Rambam writes (in *Hilchos Temidin Umusafin*):⁴ “For the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices, the Song of *Haazinu* is recited. It was divided into six segments — {known by the acronym} *haziv lach*⁵ — just as it is read {divided into} six {*aliyos*} in the synagogue.”

We need to clarify:

The Song of *Haazinu* consists of rebuke. This is even cited in halachah (as a novelty), as Rambam says in *Hilchos Tefillah*:⁶ “Whoever is called to read from the Torah begins and concludes with something positive. However, for *parshas Haazinu*, the first {person called to the Torah} reads until ‘Remember the days of old.’” Rambam then spells out in detail which sections are read for the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth *aliyos*, concluding: “Why is the Torah reading paused at these points? Because these are {verses of} rebuke, intended to motivate the people to repent.”

But seemingly, “rebuke” and “song” are different, and even, contradictory!

² {*Devarim* 32:1-43.} This is how this passage is referred to in *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Sefer Torah*,” ch. 7, par. 10; ch. 8 (in “*Sefer Eileh HaDevarim*”); “*Hilchos Temidin Umusafin*,” ch. 6, par. 9.

³ *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

⁴ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Temidin Umusafin*,” ch. 6, par. 9.

⁵ {*Haazinu* is divided in six sections; the first letter of each section forms the acronym, ך״ו״ל״ז״ח״ז״ה״}

⁶ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tefillah*,” ch. 13, par. 5.

2.

HAAZINU IS A SONG

Ramban⁷ explains the reason the **Torah** calls *Haazinu* “this song.”⁸ “It is called ‘song’ because Israel would recite it with song and music. It was also written in the style of a song⁹ since songs are written with pauses in them at the appropriate places for the tune.”

However, it is a stretch to say that for these reasons (alone) *Haazinu* was adopted as a Levitical **song** (sung in conjunction with the offering of the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices). For we can see the other verses sung during sacrifices (despite the majority of them not being written in the form of a song) were incorporated into the service because the theme of these verses is a **song** {of homage and praise} to Hashem — starting with the song that the Levites would sing on Sunday, “The earth and its fullness belong to Hashem,”¹⁰ (because {on Sunday of Creation} He acquired {the world} and transferred it {to man}, and He was the only ruler in His world);¹¹ and ending with the song for Shabbos, “A Psalm, a song for the Shabbos day”¹² (“For the day that is entirely Shabbos,” or “in commemoration of His rest”).¹³ The song of Shabbos afternoon strikes a similar note, “אֶזְרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל”¹⁴ and, “מִי־כָמֹכָה.”¹⁵

In addition, the expression, “this song” (in the Torah) is rendered by *Targum*¹⁶ as “this praise.” In fact, this song is counted as one of the ten songs “that are said in this world.”¹⁷ The other songs are all about the revealed goodness and kindness from Hashem — beginning with “A song for the Shabbos

⁷ Devarim 31:19.

⁸ *Devarim* 31:19 (see Rashi and the other commentaries); *Devarim* 31:21, 22, 30; 32:44.

⁹ {Like other Scriptural “songs” or poetry, it is written in broken lines, with alternating segments of text and blank segments (*Megillah* 16b) rather than in full lines of text as is the rest of Scripture.}

¹⁰ *Tehillim* ch. 24.

¹¹ *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

¹² *Tehillim* 92.

¹³ The two views mentioned in *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

¹⁴ {*Shemos* 15:1.}

¹⁵ {*Shemos* 15:11.}

¹⁶ *Targum Onkelos* and *Targum Yonasan ben Uziel* on the verses cited in fn. 7.

¹⁷ *Targum*, beg. of “*Shir HaShirim*”; see also *Or HaTorah*, beg. of “*Shir HaShirim*.”

day,” which Adam said when “the Shabbos day came and protected him,” and up until the tenth song, which we will sing very soon as we leave exile.

3.

A SONG OF PUNISHMENT?!

It makes sense for the *parshah* as a whole to be called “a song,” since “this song is a clear promise about the future redemption,”¹⁸ as outlined at the **conclusion** of the song (and similarly, at its start).

However, the entire Song of *Haazinu* was not ordained to be said at the *musaf* sacrifice of every Shabbos — instead, one of the six parts (segments) was said each week, “six segments... one every week.” This raises the question:

When it comes to the earlier segments of the song, consisting of Hashem’s favors and kindnesses to the Jewish people, and the later segments in which Hashem promises not to annihilate the Jewish people, and that ultimately, they will merit redemption — we can discern their song-like element. But the intermediate parts that discuss the precipitous fall of the Jewish people, and punishment, etc. — how can these segments **individually** be considered to be a song on their designated Shabbos?!

¹⁸ Ramban on *Devarim* 32:40.

4.

RASHI VS. RAMBAM

Concerning the division of the *parshah* according to the acronym, “*haziv lach*,”¹⁹ there are a number of opinions:

Rashi²⁰ maintains that on the fourth Shabbos (the segment “*vav*” of *haziv*) they would say from “Hashem saw {וַיִּרְא} and was abhorred”²¹ until (the “*lamed*” of “*lach*”) “were it not for {לֹאִי} the wrath of the enemy.”²² This segment speaks entirely of the Jewish people’s punishment. Similarly, Rashi’s definition of the fifth segment — going from (ל), “Were it not for {לֹאִי} the wrath of the enemy” until (כ), “For {כִּי} Hashem shall judge His people”²³ — also {discusses punishment}, for through that point, “Moshe exhorted them with words of **rebuke**, so that this song should be a witness against them, that when the **retribution** would come upon them....”²⁴

According to Rambam’s arrangement of the segments,²⁵ “The fourth segment continues from ‘Hashem saw and was abhorred’ until ‘O that they were wise!,’”²⁶ which includes the verse, “Were it not for the wrath of the enemy” — that is, the grounds for Hashem sparing the Jewish people from annihilation. “The fifth segment begins from, ‘O that they were wise!,’ until ‘For I lift up my hand to Heaven.’”²⁷ This segment includes the verses, “For Hashem shall judge... and reconsider his servants,” until, “For I lift my hands up to Heaven.” These verses are already part of the “words of comfort”²⁸ and Hashem’s salvation.

¹⁹ See the various opinions cited in *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, “*HaZiv Lach*.”

²⁰ Rashi on *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

²¹ *Devarim* 32:19.

²² *Devarim* 32:27.

²³ *Devarim* 32:36.

²⁴ Rashi on *Devarim* 32:35, s.v., “*VeChash*.”

²⁵ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tefillah*,” ch. 13, par. 5.

²⁶ *Devarim* 32:29.

²⁷ *Devarim* 32:40.

²⁸ Rashi on *Devarim* 32:35, s.v., “*VeChash*”: “From here on, he called words of consolation to witness upon them.”

This means that in Rambam’s arrangement, no segment (of the six segments) contains a message of retribution **exclusively**, for even the two middle segments contain words of comfort.

Yet, it is clear that even according to Rambam, this would not be sufficient grounds for us to refer to the content of these two segments, not even the fifth segment alone, as “**A song to Hashem**” — for the majority of the verses in this {fifth} segment are words of rebuke, from “O that they were wise” and onward. The fourth segment, too, certainly cannot be called “a song,” as it is comprised entirely of “words of rebuke,” for the verse “were it not for the wrath of the enemy” is, in fact, a rebuke, as is clear. (It is only due to the “wrath of the enemy” that Hashem did not act upon His warning: “I will eradicate their remembrance from mankind.”)²⁹

5.

ONE ENTITY

Rambam addresses this issue through his nuanced wording:³⁰

The Gemara describes this subject as follows:

What would they {the Levites} recite at the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices? Rav Chanan bar Rava said in the name of Rav: They would recite {in accordance with the mnemonic} “*haziv lach*.” And Rav Chanan bar Rava said in the name of Rav: In the manner that they {the verses of the Song of *Haazinu*} are divided here, so are they divided {when they are read} in the synagogue on Shabbos.

Rambam, however, puts it this way:

For the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices, the Song of *Haazinu* is recited. It is divided into six segments — {known as} *haziv lach*³¹ — just as it is read {divided into} six {*aliyos*} in synagogue. One segment is read every Shabbos, and when recitation of the song is completed after six Shabbosos, it is read again from the beginning.

²⁹ *Devarim* 32:26.

³⁰ {*Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Temidin Umusafin*,” ch. 6, par. 9.}

³¹ {*Haazinu* is divided into six sections; the first letter of each section forms the acronym, ך״ל״ו״י״ל״ה״}

a. Rambam **deviates** regarding —

- i. The **sequence**: The Gemara says, “In the manner that they are divided **here**, so are they divided in the synagogue on Shabbos” — that the division in the synagogue followed the division “here.” Rambam reverses this and says that the division “here” is “just as it is read in synagogue.”
- ii. The **wording** in the Gemara is “that they are divided;” Rambam says “that they are **read** ({{divided into}} six {*aliyos*} in the synagogue).”

b. Rambam **adds** —

- i. at the beginning of his description (of the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices), “The Song of *Haazinu* is recited... *haziv lach*,” whereas the Gemara says only “*haziv lach*.”
- ii. at the conclusion of his description: “When recitation of the song is completed after six Shabbosos, it is read again from the beginning.”

We can posit that by means of all these points, Rambam clarifies the definition of the Song of *Haazinu* sung at the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifice:

The particular segment sung on Shabbos was not an **independent** song, a separate segment of the song for every specific *musaf*. Instead, in the service of each of the “Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices, they would recite the **Song of *Haazinu***.” All segments of the Song of *Haazinu* comprise one “entity”³² — the Song of *Haazinu*.

³² {In the original, “*cheftza*.”}

It is just that the rule {obligating and defining “song”} for the “person”³³ (the Levites) singing at the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices is to sing a single segment.

Moreover — it is one commandment³⁴ that applies to all six Shabbosos.

This is why Rambam **adds** (and emphasizes) here, “It is divided into the six segments — *haziv lach* — just as it is read {divided into} six {*aliyos*} in the synagogue.” By doing so, he places the emphasis (primarily) on this {the Levite's recitation of *Haazinu*} being **one** mitzvah of reading, and not (as much) on the **places for dividing** the text. That is, just as in synagogue, “**it** is read in six,” meaning, all six segments are read in one reading, so, too, during the *musaf* sacrifices on Shabbos in the Temple it is also read in one recitation of a song — the Song of *Haazinu*. It's just that “one segment is recited per Shabbos.”

Therefore, only when “recitation of **the song is completed** after six Shabbosos” can we declare that they had recited the song at the Shabbos *musaf* sacrifices.

And since the rule to sing, in this context, does not mean to recite one segment of “*haziv lach*” each Shabbos as an independent act (which would then leave room for entertaining the possibility of allowing any of the segments to be recited,³⁵ or, at any rate, not needing to resume the recitation from **the beginning** {upon completion}), but rather to “recite the Song of *Haazinu*” in its entirety, as one entity, Rambam concludes that “when recitation of the song is completed after six Shabbosos, it is read again **from the beginning.**”

³³ {In the original, “*gavra.*”}

³⁴ Namely, the service incumbent upon the tribe of Levi “to sing during the sacrifices” (see *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Klei Hamikdash*,” ch. 3, pars. 2-3). However, this does not mean that the individual Levites who began the first segment of the song had to finish it, as a different group served every Shabbos (ibid., par. 9).

³⁵ {Without following the sequential order of the segments.}

6.

THE CENTRAL POINT OF THE SONG

It is clear what the central point of the Song of *Haazinu* is, which demonstrates that it is one entity:

All the details of the Song, even its words of rebuke (where sins and punishments are discussed), explain and express not only that “The deeds of the Rock are perfect, for all His ways are just; a faithful G-d, without injustice; He is righteous and upright,”³⁶ which is mentioned at the outset of the Song [and which does not quite elicit tangible joy with song and gratitude]; but rather, that **all** events that occur to the Jewish people, even those which seem to be the opposite of good are orchestrated by Hashem for **one** purpose — the true and complete redemption at the End of Days. All these matters are phases in an orderly ascent that brings about a state of ultimate goodness for the Jewish people, through which Hashem’s dominion will be fully revealed in the future redemption.

7.

SIX DAYS OF CREATION

Yet, seemingly, further clarification is needed: Why and how do we fulfill “singing the Song” by reading six separate segments?

We can posit (based on the Chassidic interpretation) that the recitation {of *Haazinu*} during (the *musaf* sacrifices of) Shabbos accords with the singing during the six weekdays.

The explanation is as follows: The chapters of *Tehillim* that were sung during the six weekdays — on Sunday, “The earth and its fullness belong to

³⁶ *Devarim* 32:4.

Hashem,” on Monday, “Hashem is great and exceedingly praised,”³⁷ and so on — speak about matters that express and reveal Divinity throughout creation (in His world). However, {the level of} Divinity associated with Shabbos, when “He rested from all His labor,”³⁸ transcends “His labor” and all of creation. Its revelation is associated with Torah and Jewish people as they transcend creation.

Just as there are six chapters of *Tehillim* sung to Hashem regarding Creation during the six days of the week, there are six parallel segments regarding the Divine revelation associated with the Jewish people and their relationship with the Torah. (This is the essential theme of the Song, as Scripture states:³⁹ “So that this Song shall be for Me a witness against the Children of Israel”; “This Song shall speak up before it as a witness, for it shall not be forgotten from the mouth of its offspring”):⁴⁰

“On Sunday,⁴¹ they would say, ‘The earth and its fullness belong to Hashem’ — “because {on Sunday of Creation} He acquired it {the world} and transferred it {to man}, and He was the only ruler in His world,”⁴² which means that the world is Hashem’s “acquisition” and that He is the ruler. Likewise, the first segment of *Haazinu* discusses a similar concept as it applies to the Jewish people and the Torah (“*May My teachings drip as rain* — That I say in your presence, ‘the Torah that I gave to the Jewish people is life-giving to the world,’”⁴³ and) as it is made explicit at the end of the segment:⁴⁴ “He is your Father and Master; He has made you and established you.” The existence of the Jewish people is bound up with Hashem.

“On Monday they would say, ‘Hashem is great and exceedingly praised in the city of our L-rd, His holy mountain’ — “He drew distinctions between His

³⁷ {*Tehillim* ch. 48.}

³⁸ {*Bereishis* 2:3.}

³⁹ {*Devarim* 31:19.}

⁴⁰ {*Devarim* 31:21.}

⁴¹ Wording of *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Temidin Umusafin*,” ch. 6, par. 9 (and similarly concerning the other days discussed below in this *sichah*); and wording of the mishnah at the end of *Tamid*.

⁴² *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

⁴³ *Devarim* 32:2 and Rashi’s commentary.

⁴⁴ *Devarim* 32:6.

creations and ruled over them,”⁴⁵ which refers to the effect and revelation of Divinity within Creation. Corresponding to this, we read in the second segment of the Song of *Haazinu*,⁴⁶ “When the Supreme One gave nations their portion... He set the borders of peoples according to the number of the Children of Israel. For Hashem’s share is His people...” — how the Jewish people are distinguished from among all other nations by virtue of how “they accepted His Torah, and **His dominion** and yoke.”⁴⁷ It also describes the manifold kindnesses and favors that Hashem did for the Jewish people, which expresses even more how “Hashem is **great and exceedingly praised.**”

“On Tuesday, they would say,⁴⁸ “*Elokim* stands in the Divine assembly, in the midst of judges shall He judge,” which denotes a form of restraint and concealment.

[This is in addition to the general rule that the name *Elokim* functions as a shield and sheath for the name of *Havayah*, as it says,⁴⁹ “For a sun and a shield is *Havayah* and *Elokim*” (which is why *Elokim* has the numerical value {86} of *ha’teva* {nature},⁵⁰ for it conceals the supra-natural light of *Havayah*).⁵¹ This concept is expressed in this verse {of Tuesday’s song}. As the Gemara explains, we recite “*Elokim* stands...,” “since He **revealed the earth** in His wisdom and prepared the planet for His people.”⁵² There was an expression of “the **revealed world**” — of what was previously hidden within the world of concealment (where entities are utterly subsumed within their source, like fish are subsumed in the sea).⁵³ And automatically, the category of “land” and earthliness were revealed.]

⁴⁵ *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

⁴⁶ *Devarim* 32:8 ff.

⁴⁷ Rashi on *Devarim* 32:10.

⁴⁸ {*Tehillim* ch. 82.}

⁴⁹ *Tehillim* 84:12; see *Tanya*, “*Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*,” ch. 4, 6.

⁵⁰ *Pardes, shaar* 12, ch. 2; *Shelah* (89a) seems to imply that this is sourced in the *Zohar*; *Tanya*, “*Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*,” ch. 4, 6.

⁵¹ See *Tanya*, “*Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*,” ch. 4, 6, for a lengthy discussion of this matter.

⁵² {*Rosh Hashanah* 31a.}

⁵³ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Tzav*,” 14b ff, et al.

Corresponding to this theme, in the third segment (of *Haazinu*), we recite verses describing how the Jewish people became detached from Divinity to the extent that “you forgot the G-d who formed you.”⁵⁴

“On Wednesday they would say,⁵⁵ “G-d of vengeance, Hashem; G-d of vengeance, appear” — “Since He created the sun and moon {then}, and will eventually exact retribution from their worshippers.”⁵⁶ Corresponding to this theme, in the fourth segment of the Song of *Haazinu*, we read verses describing the punishments and suffering of the Jewish people.

“On Thursday, they would say,⁵⁷ ‘Sing joyously to the G-d of our strength, call out to the G-d of Yaakov.’” In the fifth segment, we recite {verses describing} “words of comfort that will come upon them,” which leads to “sing...”⁵⁸

“On Friday they would say,⁵⁹ ‘Hashem has reigned, He has donned grandeur, Hashem has donned strength,’” and corresponding to this, in the sixth segment we recite {verses describing} the redemption at the End of Days, at which point Hashem’s dominion will be revealed in its full strength and potency.

On this basis, we can say, “בא ללמד ונמצא למד”:⁶⁰ Just as the six segments of the Song of *Haazinu* comprise one (whole) Song, as mentioned above, the same applies to the songs of the six (or seven) days of the week (workdays); they are not (only) independent songs (*psalms*), with one song per day, but rather, they constitute one (whole) song together.

In light of this, the song of Wednesday — “G-d of vengeance, Hashem” — “Since He created the sun and moon {then}, and will eventually exact **retribution** from their worshippers”⁶¹ — is also not a song dedicated to the

⁵⁴ *Devarim* 32:18.

⁵⁵ {*Tehillim* ch. 94.}

⁵⁶ *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

⁵⁷ {*Tehillim* ch. 81.}

⁵⁸ {*Devarim* 32:43.}

⁵⁹ {*Tehillim* ch. 93.}

⁶⁰ {A Talmudic expression used when a rule or concept was originally cited as the basis for an interpretation, but turned out to have its own definition enhanced by the process.}

⁶¹ {*Rosh Hashanah* 31a.}

concept that “He will eventually exact retribution from their worshippers,” but rather, it can be understood as an element of the songs of the six (or seven) days of the week — it leads to the revelation of Hashem’s dominion on Friday,⁶² “Hashem has reigned, He has donned grandeur.”

8.

TWO TYPES OF TESHUVAH

There are many years when we read *parshas Haazinu* on Shabbos Teshuvah. On this basis, we can posit that in *parshas Haazinu*, allusion is not only made to its essential connection to the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, by “the Torah reading {being} paused at these points because these are {verses of} rebuke, intended to motivate the people **to repent**,” but it also alludes to the unique Divine service and {type of} *teshuvah* associated with Shabbos Teshuvah (and the Ten Days of *Teshuvah* overall).

The difference between the *teshuvah* of the days of the week and the *teshuvah* of Shabbos is that during the days of the week, the approach is one of “lower *teshuvah*,” and on Shabbos (“Shabbos, שבת has the same letters as *tashev*, תשב”⁶³), the approach is one of “higher *teshuvah*.”

Though in general terms, this is what differentiates the *teshuvah* of Ten Days of *Teshuvah* from the *teshuvah* of the rest of the year. (Namely, all year long, we generally utilize the approach of lower *teshuvah*, and during the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, the primary *teshuvah* focus is on higher *teshuvah*.)⁶⁴ Nevertheless, as known (and discussed on various occasions),⁶⁵ the primary and ideal service of higher *teshuvah* takes place on Shabbos Teshuvah.

⁶² On a simple level, through the retribution against those who do not acknowledge His Oneness, His dominion is revealed on earth.

⁶³ {“Return”} *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hateshuva*,” ch. 10; see also *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shir HaShirim*,” 66c; et al.

⁶⁴ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shir HaShirim*,” 66c, 67d.

⁶⁵ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 14, p. 143 ff.

The fundamental difference between lower and higher *teshuvah* in a person's soul is that lower *teshuvah* is brought about by a broken, crushed heart and feelings of bitterness,⁶⁶ whereas higher *teshuvah* is performed “with great joy.”⁶⁷

This is alluded to in *parshas Haazinu*:

It has within it concepts that are “rebuke, intended to motivate the people **to repent**,” yet at the same time, it is referred to as a “song,” and the Levites recited it as a **song** during the sacrifices (together with musical accompaniment) — all together as an experience of joy (which is why “we only recite songs over wine, as it says... ‘{wine} **that gladdens** Hashem and people”).⁶⁸ We even (according to one opinion)⁶⁹ derive “the basic requirement of a song from the Torah” from the verse, “Since you did not serve Hashem with joy and gladness of heart”⁷⁰ — “What is the service of the heart that is performed with joy and gladness of heart? You must say that this is a song.”

9.

THE KEY TO REDEMPTION

The perspective that the Song of *Haazinu* is all about higher *teshuvah* aligns well with the simple meaning of *parshas Haazinu*:

The simple intent of the instruction to write “this song” was “so that this song shall be for Me a witness” — a testimony regarding Torah and mitzvos; it is the Song that leads to the Jewish people observing the entire Torah and mitzvos with vitality.⁷¹

⁶⁶ *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hateshuva*,” ch. 7; see ch. 10.

⁶⁷ *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hateshuva*,” end of ch. 11 (111a).

⁶⁸ *Berachos* 35a; *Erchin* 11a.

⁶⁹ *Erchin*, *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Devarim* 28:47.

⁷¹ As in the straightforward understanding of the verse. This is explained at length by *Abarbanel* and other commentators on *Devarim* 31:19.

This is also seen in the fact that although the verse, “And now, write this song for yourselves,” serves as the basis for our Sages’ interpretation⁷² that there is a mitzvah for every Jew to write the entire Torah, a Torah scroll, the Torah still uses the term “this song,” which, simply understood,⁷³ refers to the Song of *Haazinu*, since this Song is the testimony that enlivens and ensures the {observance of} the entire Torah.⁷⁴

[We can posit that this is also indicated by the entire Song of *Haazinu* being recorded in one “*parshah*” and chapter — chapter **lev**, {“heart,” the numerical equivalent of} 32, which alludes to the entire Torah. As is known,⁷⁵ the Torah begins with the letter **beis** (בְּרֵאשִׁית) and ends with the letter **lamed** — (לְעֵינֵי כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל) — {*beis* and *lamed* making the word} לֵב. In addition, the effect of the song is similar to the physical heart: Just as the subsistence and life of the entire body depend on the heart,⁷⁶ so too does the entire Torah depend on the (testimony of) the Song of *Haazinu*. This is the “heart” of the entire Torah.]⁷⁷

This is the theme of *teshuvah*, especially higher *teshuvah*, which does not mean “a technical repentance from sin,”⁷⁸ but rather, an approach to serving Hashem according to which a person’s aim is “to restore the soul to its source and root and to cleave to Him.” Such a *teshuvah* strengthens and enlivens the service of Torah and mitzvos so that the person’s deeds become “good and luminous deeds” (through *teshuvah*).

⁷² *Sanhedrin* 21b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Sefer Torah*,” ch. 7.

⁷³ As interpreted by Rashi and the other commentaries on *Devarim*, *ibid*.

⁷⁴ See *Abarbanel* on *Devarim*, *ibid.*, that the mitzvah is for each individual Jew to copy the song {of *Haazinu*} and be familiar with it. This is the meaning of the verse, “So that this song shall be for Me a witness against the Jewish people” — “Meaning, it should be familiar to all the Jewish people, and they will not need to search for a Torah scroll; rather, this song will be found in their mouths.”

This is perhaps the source for the importance ascribed to each individual studying *Haazinu*, as known (see *Sefer HaSichos* 5701, p. 56; *Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash*, p. 74; Maharal of Prague’s *Sefer HaZichronos*, ch. 29, on this topic.)

⁷⁵ See *Osiyos DeRabbi Akivah*, “*os Beis*,” at the end.

⁷⁶ See *Zohar*, vol. 3, 221b; *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaKodesh*,” ch. 31.

⁷⁷ Note what is explained (in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, p. 156, fn. 23) that the chapter in *Tanya* where it discusses the idea of *ahavas yisrael* is chapter 32, and *ahavas yisrael* “is the entire Torah” (*Shabbos* 31a).

⁷⁸ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shemini Atzeres*,” 85a.

When the Jewish people do *teshuvah*, they will be redeemed at once⁷⁹ — the personal redemption of each Jew⁸⁰ — and every individual merits the (complete) *g'mar chasimah tovah*, being sealed for a good year on Yom Kippur.

And through this, we all merit the collective redemption, the true and complete redemption, when there will be a “new song” in the masculine form,⁸¹ an eternal redemption that will never be followed by exile.⁸² May it happen swiftly, in our time, in reality.

— From talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Haazinu*, 5741 (1981) and 5742 (1982)

⁷⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Teshuvah*,” ch. 7, par. 5.

⁸⁰ See *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaKodesh*,” ch. 4.

⁸¹ {*Haazinu* is referred to as a שירה, which is feminine. The “new song” is a שיר חדש in the masculine.}

⁸² See *Tosafos, Pesachim* 116b, s.v. “*Venemar*,” quoted by *Rabbeinu Bachya* on *Devarim* 31:30, regarding the song of *Haazinu*.