

# Torah Talk—מאמרי תורה



*The Parasha Letter of The Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital*

**Parashat Haazinu**  
**September 26, 2015**

**פרשת האזינו**  
**י"ג בתשרי תשע"ו**

Torah Reading: *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 32:1-52

At the end of Moshe's last speech to *Bnei Yisrael*, Hashem tells Moshe to write down a song to teach to the Israelites. "Put this song in their mouths," Hashem says, "so that the words may become a witness for Me against them. After I bring them to the land that flows with milk and honey, they will eat and be satisfied and become obese. They will turn to other gods and serve them and mock Me and break My covenant. Then when many oppressive evils come upon them, this song will testify against them as witness."

Verse 15 states the problem most clearly: "וַיִּשְׂמֵן וַיִּשְׂרֹן וַיִּבְעֵט, "But Yeshurun [another name for Yisrael] became fat and kicked – you became fat, you grew thick, you became gross – and he forsook God who made him, and debased the Rock of his salvation."

Many of us are familiar with the old American adage, "There are no atheists in fox holes," meaning that, when people have something critical on the line, many of them turn almost automatically to Hashem. The question is whether people recognize the goodness of God when things are going fine for them, when they become proverbially "fat."

These days, on social media, we often see people complaining about petty things followed by the toss-off line "First world problems." It seems that they think that those three words excuse their lack of gratitude for all that they have.

This is what the Torah is taking *Bnei Yisrael* to task for. When we become too satiated, we tend to lose our sense of gratitude, and Moshe here warns the people against the complacency that will make them inured and insensitive to the blessings around them.

But the antidote to this issue appears a few verses earlier, in verse 7: זָכֹר יָמוֹת "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask your ancestor, and he will tell you, your elders, and they will say it to you."

We are blessed to live in this era, in the year 5776, in the United States of America. We have roofs over our heads, food in our bellies, almost instantaneous connections to anyone around the world, clean drinking water, and a safe environment, to name just a few of the myriad blessings we experience each and every day.

Perhaps we need to listen more to those who came before us – the elderly of our time, or the echoes of words of those who came considerably before us – to put our lives into perspective before we complain about the traffic or the slow internet speed or the tax rate.

During this season of *Yamim Noraim*, the Days of Awe, let us recommit to an attitude of gratitude, recognizing all of the good in our lives provided by God, by our country, by our communities, and by our friends and loved ones.

May 5776 prove to be a year in which we have much to be grateful for.

Shabbat shalom.

For Discussion:

- Name three things for which you are grateful.
- Discuss how you can develop an ongoing "attitude of gratitude."
- Other than saying "thank you," how can we express our gratitude for all that we have?