# Ha'Azinu: Devarim (Deuteronomy)

## What's it all about?

Most of this week's parsha is a song Moses shares with the Israelites on his last day of life. Calling heaven and earth as his witnesses, Moses asks the people to remember their history and all the miracles God had done for them, and warns them against abandoning God's commandments. The parsha concludes with God commanding Moses to climb Mount Nebo, from where **he could see the Promised Land before dying on the mountain.**



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"As an eagle awakens its nest, hovering over its young, spreading its wings when picking them up, and carrying them on its pinions, God, unassisted, guided them, and there was no other deity who could contend with Him."

# **Take** a deeper dive

This week's parsha, the Torah's penultimate, brings us to one of the heights of Jewish spirituality. For one whole month, Moses has been teaching Torah to his people. He told them all about their past and the future. He repeated the laws. He appointed his successor. And now, as he's about to die, he's singing them a song.

Why?

Because, the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks taught us, **there's something profoundly spiritual about music.** "Faith is more like music than science," he observed. "Science analyses, music integrates. And as music connects note to note, so faith connects episode to episode, life to life, age to age in a timeless melody that breaks into time. God is the composer and librettist. We are each called on to be voices in the choir, singers of God's song. *Faith is the ability to hear the music beneath the noise.*"

That's no mere flight of fancy. One time, Rabbi Sacks recalled, he watched a teacher explaining to young children the difference between a physical possession and a spiritual one. "He had them build a paper model of Jerusalem," Rabbi Sacks wrote. "Then he played a song about Jerusalem on a cassette tape, and taught the song to the class. At the end of the session he did something very dramatic. He tore up the model and shredded the tape. He asked the children, 'Do we still have the model?' They replied, No. 'Do we still have the song?' They replied, Yes." We, too, might've lost the physical Moses a long time ago, but **his song lives on forever.**

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