

HAAZINU 1979

We read the Haphtorah for Shabbos Shuvah. We told to take words. Words are stressed throughout Judaism especially on the High Holidays. The Kol Nidrei is basically a prayer about words. Moshe in the beginning of his farewell poem tells the heavens and earth to give heed to the words of his mouth. Words important. Speech is what differentiates man from animals. Animals can't ever physically speak, have no vocal chords. Speech important because we can't know a thing unless we can name it, define it. That's what almost all science about, naming things, that's why G-d commanded Adam to name animals. Speech is needed for intellect. But more than that, speech is a great revealer of the inner man, of our feelings towards things. We are commanded to make a Brocha before learning Torah if not our learning will be destructive, not constructive. The purpose of learning is to refine us, to make us holy. It's not just to get facts. Torah is not a history book or an archeological manual. It is meant to change us to make us better. If we use it for that purpose. If not it won't help us. We learn about the need to make a Brocha before learning from this Torah portion. Havu Godel. Speech reveals man. If our speech comes out mean or sarcastic or tricky then we should examine ourselves. What we are to do is to internalize values of our religion, if we haven't we should try again. Our speech reveals our feelings. The same word can be expressed many ways. Story about woman who had been engaged. Her friend asked her if she's still engaged. No, I don't feel the same way about him. Did you return ring? No, I still feel the same about the ring. Our feelings must be purified and our speech lets us know if they have been.