Parashat Haazinu | Deuteronomy 32:1–52

> *"[God] found them in a desert region, In an empty howling waste.*
> *[God] engirded them, watched over them, Guarded them as the pupil of God's eye.*
> *Like an eagle who rouses its nestlings, Gliding down to its young..." (Deut. 32:10-11, JPS)*

Jewish tradition notices a curious absence in the text. Asks Abravanel (15th-16th century): *How could Moses say God found them in the wilderness when God first found them in Egypt? Why is the Exodus event absent?*

Says Leibowitz (20th century), a strong explanation can be found by remembering the real purpose of the Exodus. It was not simply to remove the people from slavery in Egypt, but to lead them somewhere extraordinary: to be a Torah-bearing nation, entering into covenant with God. And where does this sublime calling take place? In the *wilderness*, at Sinai.

In this light, the image of the eagle is apt, as it also appears just before the giving of the Torah on Sinai: "*I bore you on eagles' wings"* (Exodus 19:4).

Reflection:
Eagles' wings, the desert... Reflect on how these images speak to me about God's continuing call and guidance in my life?

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