

א ביסל תורה!

September 19, 2025

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

כ"ו אלול תשפ"ה · נצבים

This is Not Far From You, it is Close

By Ethan Ravid '27

As we approach ראש השנה and יום כיפור, we think about the idea of תשובה, repentance, and starting off the new year without sin. We want to do the מצוות and do what is right. In this weeks פרשה, we have the פסוק of פִּי-קֶרֶבּ אֵלַיִךְ הַדְבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְבְּךָ "לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ" (דברים ל"ד) "For the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart to do it". While this פסוק has many interpretations, they all connect to the themes of ראש השנה and יום כיפור, as the previous phrases explain. כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלֶאת הִוא מִמֶּךָ וְלֹא רְחֹקָה הִוא: לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִוא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשְּׁמַיִמָּה וְיִקְחָהּ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעֲנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה "as this מצוה that I am commanding you today, is not hidden and not far away; it is not in the heavens to say 'who will rise to the heavens to take it for us and we will hear it and act upon it'" (ל"ב). רש"י adds to this פסוק to clarify that "לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִוא" does not mean it is out of reach, rather that if it were in heaven, we would still need to try to get there. וְלֹא-מֵעֵבֶר לַיָּם הִוא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ. "אֶל-עֵבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחָהּ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעֲנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה" and it is not across the sea to say 'who will cross for us to the other side of the sea and take it for us and we will hear it and do it'" (ל"ג). רש"י adds that the "it" that is close to you is the תורה שבכתב and the תורה שבעל פה.

This entire set of פסוקים is both vague and does not give much insight into what מצוה is close to us. How come there is so much repetition in these

פסוקים? Why does the תורה need to clarify that this מצוה is "not hidden, isn't far, isn't in the heavens or the ground"? Why does it then go to the positive command of "it's close to you, in your mouth and heart"?

רמב"ן says that this passage is explaining the commandment mentioned as not just being about the entire תורה, but specifically about the commandment of תשובה. The idea is that even if we are scattered to the farthest corners of the earth or ruled by other nations, we can always return to G-d and make a full תשובה. The מצוות are not something difficult or distant, rather they are something that is always near and accessible. The key point is that repentance involves both words (confessing sins) and the heart (returning to G-d and accepting the תורה), and this process should be done with sincerity and commitment for future generations. Some interpret this פסוק to be referring to תשובה, while others claim it applies to any מצוה; however, this is not my primary focus. I want to focus on the repetition. One could suggest that the repetition here is to make the point that we are human. We will do things that are below us, and we will do things way beyond our capabilities. The repetition is to make an emphasis that we are close to G-d, and nothing is hidden, too far, in the skies, or on the ground. Everything is close to us, we just need to search for it, and find it. During these upcoming holidays, we feel this increased connection with G-d. Our entire future is being written, stamped, and decided over the course of a couple weeks. It is

important that we remind ourselves that G-d is close to us, and with us, always. If we try to reach out to Him, He will answer, and help us grow. I hope that as we near these holidays, we can think about how close G-d really is to us, and think about how important it is to us, and Him, that we have the appreciation to the extra phrases taken to explain to us the importance of doing מצוות and following the תורה.

Hashem is Always There

By Nessa Jaffe '27

After last week's פרשה was filled with almost one hundred curses, this week's פרשה has a comforting paragraph about תשובה. This prophecy will be fulfilled after the second גלות - after the curses from last week's פרשה happen. We will return to Hashem, and Hashem will return us to Him. As the פסוק says, וְשִׁבְתָּ עַד-ה' אֶל-לִקְיֹךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֶיךָ כְּכֹל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: וְשָׁב ה' אֶל-לִקְיֹךָ אֶת-שְׁבוּתְךָ וְיָרַחֲמְךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצְךָ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפְצִצְךָ ה' אֶל-לִקְיֹךָ שָׁמָּה "And you will return (do תשובה) to Hashem your G-d and listen in His voice, like everything that I am commanding you today, you and your sons in all your heart and all your soul. And Hashem your G-d will return your captives and have mercy on you and gather you from all the nations that Hashem your G-d scattered you there" (דברים ל:ב-ג).

However, רש"י points out that the פסוק should have said "והשיב" "and (G-d) will return" - in the הפעיל form, rather than "שב" "(G-d) returns" - in the קל form. רש"י gives two explanations for this change in grammar. The first explanation is that it is as if Hashem will have to come and physically take

people back from exile even though they will not want to come. The second, and more comforting reason, is that no matter where we are, even when we are in exile Hashem's presence is with us, so when He returns us from exile, He too returns with us. A similar idea is found in this week's "בְּכָל-צָרָתָם וּ (לא) [לן] צָר וּמָלְאךָ פָּנָיו הוֹשִׁיעֵם". הפטורה "בְּאֵהֱבָתוֹ וּבְחֶמְלָתוֹ הוּא גָאֵלָם וְיִנְטָלָם וְיִנְשָׂאָם כְּלִימֵי עוֹלָם" "In all of their troubles [G-d] was troubled, and the angel of the divine Presence delivered them. In love and pity it was [G-d] who redeemed them, raised them, and exalted them all the days of eternity" (ישעיהו סג:ג). In this פסוק there is a קרי and כתיב, a difference between the way the פסוק is written and the way the פסוק is read. The כתיב (the way the פסוק is written) says "לא" with an א - meaning not. This is saying that even in all their pain Hashem does not give them the full pain, since Hashem is so close to us He does not want us to be in pain. Similarly, the קרי (the way the פסוק is read) says "לא" with a ו meaning Him. If this is the meaning of the פסוק then the פסוק means that Hashem is so close to us that wherever we are in pain Hashem is there too. Hashem is always with us, even in our pain. May we all remember that Hashem's presence is resting in us, even during exile, and we should merit to return from exile and be eager to return.



Receive A BISL TORAH
on WhatsApp

A BISL TORAH

is published weekly
at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
Eitan Orkaby '27
Theo Fraenkel '28

EDITORS
Anna Szalat '28
Noah Levy '29
Joshua Jaffe '29

FACULTY ADVISOR
Rabbi Yaakov Jaffe

FOUNDERS
Binyamin Orkaby '24
Ephraim Fischer '24
