

א ב י ס כ ל ת ו ר א !

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Hashem Never Looks Away

By Ozzie Vidan '26

The מצוה קז"א (ספר החינוך) develops the beautiful idea expressed in תהילים: "פִּי לֹא אֶל־לִיחַפְּצֵי־רָשָׁע אֶתֶּהּ" (תהילים ה:ה). G-d does not punish any creature from His desire for punishment, as He only desires the health and prosperity for His creations. Rather, it is man who punishes himself due to his deviation from the תורה's path. Through this, man removes himself from Hashem's protection, until he decides to wake up and repent. פרשה וילך, the last פרשה of rebuke in ספר דברים, represents this idea. For example, Hashem tells משה that בני ישראל will indeed abandon Hashem once they enter ארץ ישראל and forget all the care and compassion He has shown them in the desert. In a rather harsh פסוק, Hashem says, "וְעִזְבֹתֶימָם וְהִסְתַּרְתִּי פְנֵי מֹהֶם וְהָיָה לָאֵכָל וּלְמִצָּאָהוּ רָעוֹת" (דברים י:יז) "I will abandon them and I will conceal myself from them. They will be consumed and many evils and troubles will befall them" (דברים י:יז). The חזקוני, thankfully, turns this פסוק around and uses it to convey Hashem's true love for His children. Hashem, says the חזקוני, can not bear to watch the pain and suffering being inflicted upon us. He has no choice but to conceal himself from our oppression in order to save Himself from the devastation of our distress. Similarly, the גמרא in חגיגה (ה:) understands this פסוק in an optimistic light: although Hashem has turned away from us, He nonetheless is working in the shadows - always

watching us, always caring for us. Additionally, the סליחות in his explanation on ערוך השולחן refutes the heretical understanding of this פסוק. One, he says, could think that this פסוק literally means that Hashem will forsake and cut off His relationship with us. However, he says, that the initial reading of the פסוק is completely mistaken. "וְהִסְתַּרְתִּי פְנֵי מֹהֶם" solely means that we will not be able to see Hashem, yet He surely sees us and is carefully watching our every step, eager to assist and protect.

Hashem is always there. Whether we can see it or not, whether He is working in the shadows or showing His might to the world, He is there, pulling the strings, so everything falls into place for the Jewish people. Hashem would never desire to hurt us or cause any sort of suffering whatsoever to happen to His children, but as our Father and King He must do what is required for us to realize our mistakes and return to His תורה and מצוות, as מצוות רבא נאג tells us: "no evil descends from Above." None of the evil nor the horrible events that befall בני ישראל are because of Hashem, they are because of us. Hashem is screaming at us to repent, begging us to confess our sins and return to Him, just like Rav Soloveitchik writes in *The Lonely Man of Faith*, "a tormented soul finds peace in confessing." This יום כיפור brings with it a year of pain, suffering, and tremendous loss for בני ישראל. However, we must recognize that these יסורים do not come without cause because not only have we suffered in the past year, but we have also sinned greatly. It is very tempting to think that Hashem

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