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Hashem Never Looks Away

By Ozzie Vidan '26

The מצוה קד"א) develops the beautiful idea expressed in ביו לא אַ-ל־חפּץ־רָשׁעוּ אַתַה": "בִּיוּ לא אַ-ל־חפּץ־רָשׁעוּ אַתַה" "G-d does not desire evil" (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 חורה's path. Through this, man removes himself from Hashem's protection, until he decides to wake up and repent. פרשת 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, "הַטְתַּרָתִּי פַנֵי מֶהֶם וְהָיָה לֶאֱכֹל וּמְצַאָהוּ רַעוֹתי פַנֵי מֶהֶם וְהַיָה לֶאֱכֹל וּמְצַאָהוּ וצרוֹת וצרוֹת "I will abandon them and I will conceal myself from them. They will be consumed and many evils and troubles will befall them" (דברים לא:יז). The פסוק thankfully, turns this פסוק around and uses it to convey Hashem's true love for His children. Hashem, says the חיזקוני, 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 וה:) חגיגה 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 ערוך השולחן in his explanation on סליחות. 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 יְוֹהְסְתַּרְתִּי פָנֵי מֵהֶם" 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 נא:ג tells us: "no evil descends from Above." None of the evil nor the horrible events that befell 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 עם 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 has forsaken us, that He no longer cares about the state of His nation. In fact, all the tragedies that we have gone through could testify to this assumption, but it is evident from the תורה that this is not so. In the past year Hashem has worked wondrous miracles, both hidden and revealed. Although we sin, His powerful hand is still outstretched over us, crafting every moment for the benefit of עם ישראל.

תורה of the מצוה The Last

By Oren Vidan '29

In this week's משה פרשה is about to die and he tells his successor יְּהְשִׁרִים שָּנָה" וְּעֶשִׂרִים שָּנָה" יְהְשׁלֵּך אֵלֵה בֶּן־מֵאָה יְּעָשִׁרִים שָּנָה" יְהושע יִּבְּרֵים שָּנָה אַלֵּי לֵּא תַעַבּרְ אַלֵּי לֵא תַעַבּרְ אַנִּי הַיִּים לֹא־אוּכֵל עוֹד לָצֵאת וְלָבוֹא וְה' אָמֵר אֵלֵי לֹא תַעַבּרְ יוֹם לֹא־אוּכֵל עוֹד לָצֵאת וְלָבוֹא וְה' אָמֵר אֵלֵי לֹא תַעַבּרְ הַיְּהְדֵּן הַּזְּה הַאָּר וּ מוֹל וּ am a hundred and twenty years old now, and I may no longer able to enter and to leave, since Hashem has told me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan" (דברים לֹא:ב) notes that it is written, "you shall not," showing that משה is still fully capable of doing so, but he is not allowed to and it is time for a new generation and new leader.

However, before he goes up to עולם הבא, Hashem gives him one last mission to carry out. Hashem says, "וְעַהָּהׁ בִּתְבוּ לָכֶם' אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאַת וְלַמְעָן תְּהְיָה הַזֹּאַת וְלַמְעָן תְּהְיָה הַזֹּאַת הַאָּעִר בְּבְּיִישְׁרָאֵל שִׁימָה בְּפִיהֶם לְמַעֵן תְּהְיֶה־לִּי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאַת אַת־בְּנִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁימָה בְּפִיהֶם לְמַעֵן תְּהְיֶה־לִּי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאַת "And now write down this Song and teach it to בני ישראל Place it in their mouths, that this Song may be My witness to them" (לֹא:י"ט דברים). The simple meaning of this is that Hashem is telling משה to write the song of האזינו According to the Sages, the Song that is referred to here applies to the הורה as a whole. Thus, making the very last of the 613 commandments to be, every

person has to write a ספר תורה. The question is: Why this מצוה? And why call the תורה a song?

Rabbi Sacks says as follows: The point of this מצוה is that it is not enough to say, "We received the חורה from משה," or "from our parents." We have to take the חורה and make it new in every generation. The point about the חורה is that it is old, but that it is new; it is not only from the past but about the future. The חורה speaks to us now, but we have to put in the effort to write it again.

And why call the חורה a Song? Calling the חורה a song might be because if we are to pass down our faith from generation to generation, it must sing. The חורה must be effective, not just cognitive. Since music has a close association with spirituality it is the word used to describe the חורה.

Music is a central point to Judaism. We do not pray without tune, we sing prayer. Meaning, we sing the words that we are saying to Hashem. We also do not read the תורה, we sing it to the different notes above or below each word. Each time a text is stated one can sing it in different tunes. There are different notes for different portions of תוב"ך, חומש, נביא depending on whether it is בתובים סר הומש, נביא. Music is the Map of The Jewish Spirit.



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