

א ביסל תורה!

October 3, 2025

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

י"א תשרי תשפ"ו · האדינו

משה's Final Message

By Eitan Orkaby '27

On the last day of his life, משה recites a poem to בני ישראל. The אברבנאל breaks this poem down into six sections. These sections are in order of: the introduction to the poem, all of the kindness and good that Hashem did with בני ישראל, the sins that בני ישראל committed, the punishments which Hashem will punish בני ישראל with, the punishments which Hashem decided not to give, and finally, comforting בני ישראל and the punishment which Hashem will give to their enemies.

In the beginning of the fifth section Hashem begins with explaining why He is not going to give extra punishments. Hashem does not want to have our enemies punish us too much "פְּנֵי-אֹמְרוֹ יִדְּנוּ לָמָּה וְלֹא ה' "פֶּעַל כְּלִיזָאָת דְּבָרִים" "lest they say, our hand is high, and Hashem did not make all of this happen" (ל"ב:כ"ז). Hashem does not want our enemies to believe that it was only from their strength that they were able to succeed, rather He wants "הִלְלוּ אֶת-ה' כָּל-גּוֹיִם" "all of the nations, praise Hashem" (תהלים קיד). After Hashem explains how He is the one who dealt us our punishment, He then switches focus now to בני ישראל. Since the nations of the world must understand that everything comes from Hashem, all the more so the Jewish people. We must understand that "כִּי אֲנִי אֶנִּי" "that I, I am the One, and there is no god beside Me" (דברים ל"ב:ל"ט). How are we supposed to remember this, though?

In the introductory פסוק משה's poem calls out "הָאָזְנוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְּרָה / וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אֲמִיר־פִּי" "sky, listen and I will speak / and land, hear the words of my mouth" (דברים לב:א). According to רש"י, the sky and land are being told to listen closely, so that they can testify to בני ישראל being told to remember Hashem even when being punished, lest they forget. We are left wondering, however, why are these משה's last words?

The answer, given by רש"י is that משה is trying to convey the message that we are temporary in this world and our purpose is to serve Hashem and not to go after other gods. While this is an important message to give to בני ישראל, how will they remember it if the sky and land cannot talk?

Therefore, אברבנאל provides an alternative answer. He suggests that in fact the sky and land are a metonymy, and in fact they are referring to something else entirely. He says that the sky refers to figures in high power, like the older generation and leaders, and the land refers to the lower people, or the common folk. משה is telling the leaders of the future generation that they will have the influence and power to affect how the overall population serves Hashem. They can also use that influence for bad purposes, and משה is reminding them that they should be careful in that regard. Using this explanation the words that משה uses makes a lot more sense. When משה says "אֲמִיר־פִּי" "words of my mouth" he is not referring to the words משה is about to say, rather to hear and follow what the leaders say, who they will follow what משה says.

This month's issue is sponsored by Biblical Proportions, who are launching a 10-cubit measuring tape, a 1-log measuring cup, a kezayit/kebeitza jigger, and a book of Biblical cocktails. Scan the QR code to support their Kickstarter.



To read past issues or
sponsor future visit
ABISLATORAH.ORG

As יום כיפור has just passed we have all had time to reflect on our actions for the past year and Hashem has cleaned us of any sins that we have committed. As we have a new start we should jump on the opportunity to influence the people who surround us everyday, as one cannot imagine the influence that one can have on a person. Even making small changes to our general routine will be noticed by others and might cause them to make that change as well. The message of משה בני ישראל before he passes away is to be that leader, to make that change, and lead us all one step closer to the coming of משיח.

The Last Words Are Everything

By Benjy Gerber '28

In this week's פרשה, האזינו, we have משה's final speech to the Jews. And what does משה do for his final speech? He recites a beautiful poem about the Jew's history and about staying with Hashem. Then, he says his final words to the Jewish people where he tells them to hear the תורה and put it to heart and to command their children to do the same, as it is how one needs to live (דברים לב:מו-מוז). Why did he not end with a different inspiring speech? Why does he end on this note about keeping the תורה when he just recited a whole poem about it?

רש"י says that this message is of utmost importance because we need to ensure that the תורה is fully kept, and the reward is the greatest of all, life! He says that משה ends on this note to ensure that the Jews remembered to keep the תורה. Also, משה wanted to make sure the Jews knew that their staying alive is dependent on keeping and learning the תורה.

ספרנו says it is to prevent unnecessary deaths because without the תורה, Jews will die. He says that this message says if you keep the תורה then you will have an easy life and live Jewish. On the other hand, if one does not keep the תורה then they will be corrupted. He goes further to say that if too many Jews died then the world would fall out of balance and humanity would go extinct. He then says that this is also why we should teach our children to keep the תורה, otherwise they will become corrupt too!

דברים ל"ב:מ"ו ("מעיד" מעיד) is very similar to the word "הקיד" from פרשת יתרו (שמות י"ט:כא) that means to warn. Therefore, he interprets this to mean that משה is actually warning the Jews to pay close attention to all the words of the תורה because he said to use all your heart to keep the תורה. ר' בחיי then explains that there are two parts to the heart, the good part, and the evil part, so when משה says to keep the תורה with all your heart he is referring to these two parts. Why would one want to learn תורה with the evil part of one's heart? ר' בחיי says that when Hashem created humans He did make an evil part of the heart, but made the תורה as the cure.

What we can learn from this is two important ideas. The first is that the תורה is the very essence of our life and that we should make sure to keep it and pass it to our kids. The second is that we need to learn תורה in order to keep the good part of our heart more dominant than the bad one. Overall, this just goes to show that the whole message of the תורה is that the תורה is good. In our lives we need תורה to do anything, for example, food, it is a necessity to eat, yet there are many laws regarding what we can eat and how to eat it. So, one cannot say that one can live one's life without needing תורה because it is everything.

A BISL TORAH

is published weekly
at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts



Receive A Bisl Torah on WhatsApp

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