

30 When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—¹and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which the LORD your God has banished you, ²and you return to the LORD your God, and you and your children heed His command with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin upon you this day, ³then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. He will bring you together again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the LORD your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you. ⁵And the LORD your God will bring you

וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבֹאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי
לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּת אֶל-לִבְּךָ בְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם
אֲשֶׁר הִדְיָחָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה וְשָׁבַתָּ
עַד-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ בְּכָל-
אֲשֶׁר-אֲנֹכִי מֵצִוְךָ הַיּוֹם אֹתָהּ וּבְנִיךָ בְּכָל-
לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: ³וַיָּשֶׁב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
אֶת-שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמָךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצָךָ מִכָּל-
הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיצָךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה:
⁴אִם-יִהְיֶה נִדְחָךָ בְּקֶצֶה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם
יִקְבְּצָךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחָךָ:
⁵וְהִבִּיאָךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-

רביעי
[שני]

THE POSSIBILITY OF RESTORATION (30:1-10)

Moses now offers assurance that if Israel should be exiled, God will reinstate it if the people sincerely repent of their rebellion and return to Him and His instruction.

1. Moses refers not only to the curses described in chapter 29 but also to the blessings (and

curses) of chapter 28. By doing so he declares that if the Israelites should bring disaster on themselves, the stocktaking necessary for their restoration should include the recollection that while disobedience led to disaster, obedience led to success.

that I have set before you That I have offered you as alternatives.

5. This promise is perhaps intended to en-

and accept). We should be reluctant to judge others, for only God can see into a person's heart and know that person's motivation, whereas we can only see the person's deeds. And most imaginatively: Anonymous saints are a source of pleasure to God, but society needs role models whose virtuous lives escape anonymity and are conspicuous, that we might learn from them (Meir Yehiel of Ostrowiec).

CHAPTER 30

The Hebrew verb meaning "return" or "repent" (*shuv*) occurs seven times in verses 1-10. This repetition is appropriate to its being read at the season of penitence, the High Holy Day season.

1. *the blessing and the curse* The blessing within the curse. There is no calamity that does not have a kernel of blessing concealed

within it, even if it only motivates us to seek the cause of the calamity and prevent it from recurring.

2. *return to* Hebrew: *v'shavta ad*, literally, "turn around toward." Similarly, a phrase in verse 10 (*tashuv el*) means "return to." This variation in language reflects two stages in the process of repentance. The first stage is a realization that our behavior is wrong and requires a change of direction. This is "turning toward" God. The second stage is coming into the presence of God as the result of one's new way of life, "returning to" God (Malbim).

3. *take you back in love* God will help you repent by sharing with you the divine capacity for love and empathy. One who regards others compassionately will not sin against them. One who comes to love God, reciprocating God's love, will not sin against God.

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

30:2. *return* *T'shuvah*, turning to God in repentance with a plea for forgiveness, is a *mitzvah* in its own right (see Comment to Num. 5:7).

to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers.

⁶Then the LORD your God will open up your heart and the hearts of your offspring to love the LORD your God with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live. ⁷The LORD your God will inflict all those curses upon the enemies and foes who persecuted you. ⁸You, however, will again heed the LORD and obey all His commandments that I enjoin upon you this day. ⁹And the LORD your God will grant you abounding prosperity in all your undertakings, in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For the LORD will again delight in your well-being, as He did in that of your fathers, ¹⁰since you will be heeding the LORD your God and keeping His commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching—once you return to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

¹¹Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is

יִרְשׁוּ אֲבֹתֵיךָ וִירִשְׁתָּהּ וְהִיטְבָּהּ וְהִרְבָּהּ
מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ:

⁶וַיִּמְלֵךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת-לִבְּךָ וְאֶת-לִבְּבָנֶיךָ

וְרָעָה לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-

לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ: וְנָתַן

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאֱלֹלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה

עַל-אִיְבֹיךָ וְעַל-שֹׂנְאֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ:

⁸וְאִתָּה תֵּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעַת בְּקוֹל יְהוָה

וַעֲשִׂית אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצֻוֶּה

הַיּוֹם: וְהוֹתִירָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל

מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ בְּפָרִי בִטֶּןךָ וּבְפָרִי בְהֵמָתְךָ

וּבְפָרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ לְטוֹבָה כִּי יֵשׁוּב יְהוָה

לְשׂוֹשׁ עֲלֶיךָ לְטוֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר-שָׂשׂ עַל-

אֲבֹתֶיךָ: ¹⁰כִּי תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

לְשָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר

הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה כִּי תֵשׁוּב אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

בְּכָל-לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: פ

¹¹כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצֻוֶּה

הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלֶאת הִוא מִמָּךְ וְלֹא רַחֲקָה

חמישי
[שלישי]

ששי

courage a future generation to return to God, assuring it that the nation's sinful past will not be held against it in any way.

6. will open up your heart Literally, "will circumcise your heart." In contrast to 10:16, where Moses exhorts Israel to circumcise its own heart, here he promises that once Israel returns to God, God Himself will remove the psycho-

logical impediments to wholehearted devotion.

CONCLUSION (vv. 11–20)

Moses assures the present generation that the terms of the Covenant are not too difficult to know, understand, and fulfill.

11. Instruction Hebrew: *ha-mitzvah*; Deuteronomy's instructions, the Teaching (*torah*).

11. this Instruction Hebrew: *ha-mitzvah ha-zot*. The Sages of the Talmud understand this as referring to the entire Torah. It is not so baffling that only the theologically astute can understand it, nor so challenging that only the spiritually gifted can fulfill it. It is well within the abilities of the average person. To later scholars (Ramban, Albo), this phrase referred to the *mitzvah* of repentance, the subject of the previous 10 verses. It is difficult to break a bad habit, to change one's way of life. Yet people who have succeeded

in doing that will testify it can be done. A *midrash* offers us the image of a mirror. The figure we see in the mirror seems to be twice as far from us as it really is. But with every step we take toward the mirror, the reflection takes a step toward us. So it is with repentance. Our goal seems so far off, but God says to us, "Take one step toward Me and then another, and I will meet you more than halfway."

not too baffling It is suitable for all, not only for scholars and philosophers.