

## Avoiding the “If Only” Syndrome

In Parshat Nitzavim Moshe transmits to Bnei Yisrael the accessibility of Jewish life and meaning:

“It is not in the heavens, that you should say, 'Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?'" (Devarim 30:11-13).

Targum Yerushalmi adds a bit of commentary into its translation:

“The Torah is not in the heavens, that you should say, 'If only we would have someone like Moshe the prophet who would ascend to the heavens and bring it to us and teach the laws, we would observe them.'

Neither is the Torah across the sea that you should say, 'If only we would have someone like Yonah the prophet who would descend to the depths of the ocean and bring it to us and teach the laws, we would observe them.’”

A major impediment to change and growth is what I call the “if only” syndrome.

A person identifies the need for change or avenues for growth. But just when the plan begins to coalesce we begin to tell ourselves, “If only.” If only times were different or the situation was more conducive, this change would occur. If only leaders the likes of Moshe or Yona were available to teach and inspire us- then we could transform.”

The antidote to the “If Only Syndrome” is a phrase found earlier in Parshat Nitzavim: *Po Imanu Hayom*.

We need to focus on Po Hayom, as mentioned at the beginning of the Parsha. Here and now. Here and now we are blessed and equipped with the teachings and capacity to make resolutions. Po Hayom, Here and Now we must reject the “if only” syndrome, and embrace the power we possess inside to change and grow.