

# Close to Us - Nitzavim

Source Sheet by Rabbi Marina Yergin

דברים ל':י"א-י"ד

כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם לֹא־נִפְלְאת הוּא מִמָּךְ וְלֹא רִחֲקָה הוּא: לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָּנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקְחֶהָ לָּנוּ וְיִשְׁמְעֵנוּ אֶת־הַיְעָשָׂנָה: וְלֹא־מֵעֵבֶר לַיָּם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר־לָּנוּ אֶל־עֵבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחֶהָ לָּנוּ וְיִשְׁמְעֵנוּ אֶת־הַיְעָשָׂנָה: כִּי־קְרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדְּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ: {ס}

## Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. 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?" No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.

## Orchot Tzadikim<sup>1</sup> 27:6

It is written in the Torah, "It is not in heaven" (Deut. 30:12) and the meaning of this is : it is not to be found among those that are arrogant and consider themselves as high as heaven. "Neither is it beyond the sea" (Deut. 30:13), which means that it is not to be found among those who are constantly travelling on sea voyages (Erubin 55a). Therefore, our Sages, of blessed memory, said, "Nor can one who is engaged overmuch in business grow wise" (Avot 2:6). And they said, "Engage less in business, but occupy yourself with the Torah" (Avot 4:12).

## Sforno<sup>2</sup> on Deuteronomy 30:12:1

היא, in order to repent you do not need to turn to a prophet who represents heaven,

## Rashi<sup>3</sup> on Deuteronomy 30:12:1

הוא IT IS NOT IN HEAVEN — for were it in heaven it would still be your duty to go up after it and to learn it (Eruvin 55a).

## Rashi on Deuteronomy 30:14:1

כִּי קְרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ BUT [THE WORD] IS [VERY] NEAR UNTO YOU — the Torah has been given to you in writing and orally.

<sup>1</sup> A book on Jewish ethics written in Germany in the 15th century. Authorship is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno (1475-1550) was a biblical commentator, philosopher, and physician from Italy.

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105) was a medieval French rabbi and author.