The men come to learn and the women come to hear. However, why do the small children come? They are too young to “learn” or even to “hear”. Rather, it is in order to give a reward to those who bring them. - Chagiga 3a

The episode of Hakhel is described as one where the fathers listen intently and study the words of Torah which are uttered by the king. The women come to hear for themselves and to bring the children to be witness to this grand event. Yet, the Gemara writes that the parents earn reward for bringing the children. What is the meaning of this?

Sfas Emes notes that we can read a powerful message into the words of this Gemara. If parents exert a concerted effort to bring their children to the Beis Midrash they thereby demonstrate their goals and aspirations that these children be provided an environment of Torah and kedushah. With this infusion of training and nurturing, these youths are set on their path of commitment to Torah and Yiddishkeit, and, as a result, they will certainly be deserving of merit. The effort of the parents to be personally involved and to have the children observe them portrayed as positive role models is critical. There is nothing that can replace the direct involvement of parents and their partnership with Torah teachers in the education of the youth, as is demonstrated by the Hakhel event. When the adults fulfill their responsibilities, they can be assured that Hashem will assist and have their efforts meet with success.

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TO EDUCATE AND DEMONSTRATE

The momentous event of “קהל”, - the gathering of the entire nation; to hear the king read from Sefer Devarim was designed to create a deep impact upon all who attended. All parents were commanded to bring their children to this convention, and the hearts of all participants, especially the youth, were moved by the overwhelming experience they attended. The verse speaks of the “children who do not know”. Precisely because the children did not understand nor comprehend the meaning of the Torah reading which the king performed, their imaginations were primed to absorb the full excitement of the event.

Malbim explains that the verse continues to relate that the children would benefit by “learning to listen and to revere”. The experience became embedded deep within the memory of the children, and the impressions of seeing so many adults coming together to honor the Torah provided these children with a foundation of respect and awe for Torah. These young minds witnessed as the adults stood for hours, totally devoted to listening to the words of Torah being read by the king. By watching their parents’ commitment to the king and his rendition of the Torah, the children internalized the dedication to Torah which their parents demonstrated. Furthermore, the actions of the king himself set an example for these tender souls. Despite his mighty stature, the king personally read
the Torah, thus portraying an impression of the paramount importance of the study of Torah for the entire nation. This tangible aura of awe and trepidation for the honor of the Shechina could be felt among the huge assembly, and the children were sure to be impressed by all these aspects of this assembly.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KOL NIDRE

HaRav Shimon Schwab notes that in the Torah we find that the chapter of Nedarim, which deals with the laws concerning vows, is placed just before the war between Yisrael and Midian. One possible reason for placing it specifically here is that at a moment of crisis it is typical of human nature that a person vows that if he is saved from danger, he will repay his good fortune in some way. Thus the Torah saw fit to detail the laws of Nedarim here, just before the declaration of war against Midian, so that Bnei Yisrael would be fully aware of the laws governing the making of vows, and they should be prepared for the consequences if these vows are not fulfilled.

We might further point out that since it is human nature to make vows at a time of crisis, there might be a tendency for one to make new vows now, at the critical moment just before the awesome Day of Atonement, when one is about to stand before the Highest Judge. Even though one’s previous vows were annulled on the eve of Rosh HaShanah, one might want to renew them now in the hope of being judged favorably on Yom Kippur and receiving the Divine Mercy which awaits one. Kol Nidre is a firm reminder that what Hashem wants is not “empty promises” or “crocodile tears”. Rather, He seeks words that truly emanate from the depths of the human heart and soul – true remorse and regret for past transgressions and a sincere desire to commit oneself to a future of righteous deeds.

From this we can understand that the ceremony of the nullification of vows is not primarily the result of fear that one might not fulfill them, but rather a sign that we are rejecting such vows because they do not reflect sincere teshuvah. A deep, genuine soul searching is what is required here, and Kol Nidre reminds us of our true priorities.

SINGLING OUT THE YETZER HARA

One of the detailed sins mentioned during the vidui is that “we have sinned before You with the yetzer hara – the evil inclination”. Is the yetzer hara not an integral part of every sin? Why is the yetzer hara singled out in its own category?

Sefer Lev Simcha explains this concept. He refers to the Mishnah in Berachos (9.2), which expounds upon the verse (Devarim 6:5): “You shall love God, your Lord, with all your heart (לבך).” The Mishnah notes that the word “heart – לבך” is written with a double letter. This teaches that one should love Hashem with a double heart, referring to both his inclinations, the yetzer toy and the yetzer hara. This means that one must take even the negative aspects of his character and utilize them for good. For example, if one has a tendency to be impulsive, he should use this excitable aspect of his nature and apply it to doing mitzvos with enthusiasm.

The Gemara in Kiddushin (30b) teaches that Hashem informed us that He created the yetzer hara, but He also created the Torah as its "ךכש - antidote". The word "ךכש" actually indicates that the Torah is a “spice” which tempers and controls the yetzer hara. The Zohar notes that if it were not for the yetzer hara, people would not experience joy and exuberance while learning Torah. If it were not for the yetzer hara, people would not experience joy and exuberance while learning Torah. When we admit that we have sinned with the yetzer hara, it may refer to this aspect of our not having used the yetzer hara to enhance our mitzvah actions.

PROTOCOLS OF JUDGMENT

What do these cryptic words mean? In the laws of judgment there are protocols that dictate the format of judgment. Most of these protocols make sense, and they can be included in what we refer to as הפיקוש (example: following the majority is something that is logical). However, there are specific cases where the protocol seems illogical, similar to what we refer to as a יד ראה נקודה votes that the defendant is guilty, we rule that he is innocent. This seems totally illogical, yet that is the rule we follow.
In the laws of judgment there are protocols that dictate the format of judgment.

TWO GOATS – TWO OBJECTIVES

The Zohar notes that the name “אָרוֹן הָמְנָאִים, coram Deo” is plural. What can we learn from the fact that the Torah does not refer to this day as “Arön hamanai” – The Day of Atonement?

We can identify two categories of improper actions. One is simply when a person neglects to do that which is incumbent upon him. The other is when a person performs the actions that are expected from him, but does them improperly. For example, he may do them for ulterior motives, or without the proper intent.

Birkas Yitzchak notes that these two situations are represented by the atonement of the two goats which were brought on Yom Kippur. The one for the Azazel carried upon itself the iniquities and transgressions of the Jewish people. This atoned for the neglectful and wanton failures of the people throughout the year, when they did not accomplish the mitzvos expected from them. The second goat was designated for an offering on the Altar, and it was upon this animal that the Kohen Gadol declared “For God! As a Chatais!” This atoned for the mitzvos that were, in fact, performed, but without proper intent and adequate focus. Until now, these mitzvos had not been accepted fully. Now, however, with the declaration of the Kohen, these mitzvos were desirable.

Accordingly, there was a dual function to the power of atonement of Yom Kippur. This day has the ability to atone for sin and to correct for mitzvos which were done improperly. The verse which describes Yom Kippur seems to allude to this dual nature of the day, as we find, “For on this day you will be atoned...from all your sins: before God you will be cleansed.” The “atonement” refers to the mitzvos and prayers which were faulty, and the “sins” refer to the lack of fulfilling one’s duty completely.

MALCHUYOS

In Lev Moshe, Rabbi Moshe Wernick, former Mashgiach at Hebrew Theological College, notes that our recognition of God as King over us is a year-long theme. Every berachah we recite features a clear declaration of God as our King, and the daily prayers are replete with countless references to God as King. What is the significance of this emphasis in this concept on Rosh HaShanah and the Ten Days of Repentance? Why must we make changes and finish the third blessing of the Amidah stating that God is the “Holy King” rather than using the usual formula saying that He is the “Holy Lord”, to the extent that if one did not make the change he must repeat the entire Amidah?

The distinction between these references is that our perception of God as “the Lord” indicates a view which is somewhat distant and less immediate than that of “the King”. The impression of the appearance of a King is one which is obvious, overt and immediate. An example of this can be seen in Tehillim (9:17): “The Lord is known by the judgement he executes, the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.” On the one hand the evil ones face their retribution, as is the judgment of the Lord. Yet, we find (Mishlei 29:4): “By justice, the King establishes the land.” The immediate and firm justice exacted by the King sets forth an order in the earth through the fear and awe which is noted by all and which causes the evil ones to cease their mischief.

When the Jewish nation witnessed the splitting of the waters of the Yam Suf, they were shown the precise justice exacted against each and every Egyptian soldier, and due to this overwhelming exposure to God’s actions, they proudly cried out (Shemos 15:18), “God is King!” This statement was not uttered at any point previously when any of the ten plagues were sent against the Egyptians. As impressive and miraculous as the plagues were, the degree of God’s Kingship was not as apparent then as it was at the shores of the Yam Suf, when the Egyptians acted with terrible insouciance as they chased the Jews into the waters. It was the immediate repercussion of being torn apart by the crashing waves that impressed the Jewish nation of God’s judgment against them.

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It is this level of God’s rule that we celebrate during these days, and it is His complete dominion over the world that we accept with joy.

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**EATING BEFORE YOM KIPPUR**

The Gemara (Yoma 81b) asks: Do we afflict ourselves on the ninth of Tishrei? Surely, Yom Kippur is on the tenth of the month! Rather, we learn from here that anyone who eats and drinks on the ninth (in order to prepare for the fast on the tenth) is credited as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth.

**Rabbi Dov Bartman** lists the various commentators who offer explanations for the mitzvah to eat on the ninth of Tishrei. **Rashi** and **Rosh** (ibid. 8:22) each explain that it is in order to ensure that everyone be physically ready, prepared and well fed, and in this way no one will be harmed by the fast. The Rosh notes that we see that Hashem feels that the Jewish people are very precious. He then adds: “This can be illustrated with a parable of a person who had great love for his son, but it was necessary for the son to abstain from eating for an entire day. The father made sure that the son ate and drank on the day before the fast so that the son would tolerate the lack of food without being hurt. So, too, Hashem commanded us to fast one day a year in order to achieve atonement for our sins. He then guided us to eat on the day before to minimize the difficulty associated with the upcoming fast.”

In **Moedim u’Zmanim, Rabbi Moshe Shternbach** points out a puzzling situation. According to Rashi and Rosh, if the reason for eating before a fast is to fulfill a mitzvah, and to be prepared and to not be harmed, why do we not find that the Rabbis made a similar arrangement for the day before Tisha B’Av? The rule is always that rabbinic laws are patterned after Torah guidelines, so if the Torah schedules a day of eating before a Torah fast (Yom Kippur), the Rabbis should have done the same for the day before Tisha B’Av. And even more curious is that the halacha on the afternoon before Tisha B’Av is that one should actually curtail his regular eating habits. **Rambam** even testifies (Hilchos Ta’anis 5:9) that in his community they never ate even a dish with lentils before Tisha B’Av, unless it was Shabbos.

Rabbi Shternbach suggests a new approach to understand the mitzvah to eat on the ninth of Tishrei. He notes that Rambam refers to the laws of Yom Kippur as “Halachos of Abstaining – The Laws of Abstaining on the Tenth.” The first thing Rambam does is to list the mitzvah to abstain from eating and drinking on Yom Kippur. The peculiar thing is that to not eat is actually a function of affliction (עינוי), whereas the term “עקטוע - abstaining” is usually used in the context of not doing any labor, as we find on Shabbos and the Yomim Tovim. What can we learn from the terminology used by Rambam?

In general, the reason we do not eat on a fast day is in order to endure some sort of physical deprivation. This causes a humbling of the spirit and directs one to teshuvah. However, Yom Kippur has a different agenda. Here, we abstain from all normal human activities, whether it be that we do no labor, or that we do not partake in eating in any form. The point is not the lacking or suffering we might experience, but rather that we spend this day emulating the conduct of angels. We eat and drink on the ninth to hopefully avoid being distracted in our goal to be as angels on the tenth.

The lesson is that we must realize that we have one day a year when we can elevate ourselves above our physical limitations, and we can soar to the level of the angels in the heavens. There is no question that as we pursue this sublime mission, we leave behind any connection to sin we might have had throughout the year.

**Ritva** (Rosh HaShanah 9a) cites his Rebbe, Rabbi Dov Bartman, and writes that our goal on Yom Kippur is to show that the day is most holy for Hashem. He then guided us to actually celebrate such a day with lavish dishes, as we do on Rosh HaShanah, but the Torah has commanded us to experience the day by abstaining from all physical activities and indulgences, and to thereby emulate the angels.

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**Halachic Corner**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shabbos Shuva</th>
<th><strong>Zmanim for Parshas Vayelech 5780</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krias Shma - Sat.</td>
<td>Tefilla - Sat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45</td>
<td>10:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:09</td>
<td>10:19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Krias Shma - Wed. | Tefilla - Wed. | Sunset | Sunrise |         |
| 9:47 | 10:44 | Tuesday | Wednesday | 6:21 | 6:56 |
| 9:11 | 10:20 |         |       | 6:19 |       |

**Shabbas Shuva**

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 606:1) instructs us that “a person should not be so cruel as not to pardon another when asked for forgiveness”. At this season, when we ask Hashem’s forgiveness for our sins, we must also be mindful of our responsibilities to one another – פן יקרב המורד – to ask forgiveness from those whom we have wronged, and to grant forgiveness to those who ask for it. The Gemara (Yoma 85b) explains that Yom Kippur does not have the power to atone for sins committed between one person and another until one asks forgiveness from his fellow man.

Rebbi Abba was once sitting at the entrance of the city of Lod as he watched a tired
traveler arrive. The wayfarer entered an abandoned building and fell asleep, unknowingly lying by a wall which was about to collapse. As Rebbi Abba watched, a poisonous snake crawled out of its hole and was about to bite the man. Suddenly a large rodent jumped out of another corner and killed the snake. When the man awoke, he saw the dead snake, and got up to leave. No sooner did he exit the room than the wall collapsed, falling exactly on the very spot where the man had slept.

Rebbi Abba detected that he had witnessed a truly miraculous series of events. He approached the person in order to find out more about him. “What merit do you have?” he asked, “for miracles of this nature do not happen without explanation.” The man explained, “Throughout my entire life, I never suffered any wrongdoing from another person without forgiving that person immediately. If I was not able to pardon the person right away, I made sure not to go to sleep that night without thinking it over and concluding that I was willing to completely overlook the incident. I totally disregarded the issue to the extent that from that day on I would even try to find opportunities to help and benefit the one who had acted against me.”

Rebbi Abba proclaimed: “Truly, this person is deserving that God should perform for him miracles upon miracles!”

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Halachic Corner is dedicated by Benyomin Freeman in memory of his father Gedalia Freeman, z”l. May his memory be for a blessing.

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Questions for Thought and Study

1. Regarding what specific area was Moshe advising Yehoshua when he said to him: ""כְּעַל אֲשֶׁר יָנָשִּׁים תַּעֲכֹב כְּעֶנֶינָי"" – “before the eyes of all of Bnei Yisrael be strong and courageous”? See Meshech Chochmah 31:7

2. Why does Moshe repeat that the children will also learn to revere Hashem during the קִרְיָת מַעֲשֶׂה – revere Hashem during the קִרְיָת מַעֲשֶׂה? See Ohr HaChaim 31:13

3. Why is a "סְפָרִיָּה" (song) written in feminine form when it is discussing something that already happened (31:30), yet it is written in masculine form – "יָמִים" – when it represents a song in the future? See Rabbi Ben Yehuda 31:30

4. What did the Arizal do to atone for possible sins that would require תָּאָשָׁר (death from heaven)? See Kuntros Aharon

5. Why do some have a custom to light candles on Yom Kippur specifically made of wax? See Kuntros Aharon

6. Besides the prohibition of washing, what other reason would one not need to wash his hands past the knuckles on Yom Kippur? See Ta’amei Minhaigim

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This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- By Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to HTC Board of Regents member Rabbi Yaakov Rajchenbach and his wife Judy on the engagement of their granddaughter, Bella Rajchenbach, to Avraham Yeshaya Swiatycki.

- Hebrew Theological College invites the community to its annual Rabbi Zvi Menachem Teller ישיבא של חצוק - Shabbos of Chizuk this Shabbos - Parshas Vayelech, September 5th. See www.chizuk.org for reservations and Shabbos info.

- The HTC Shabbos of Chizuk will also feature HTC and FYHS Rabbeim who will speak in various shuls during Seudah Shlishis: Rabbi Avraham Friedman, Khal Chasidim; Rabbi Binyamin Olstein, Yehuda Moshe - Shabbas Shuva Drasha; Rabbi Shmuel Leib Schuman, Ohel Tefillah; Rabbi Gedalia Freeman, HTC. (Prior reservations required) Free babysitting available during the program. For more information, visit htc.edu/chizuk or call 847-982-2500 x1137.

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- Congregation KINS invites the entire community to our Shabbat Shuva Drasha, delivered by Rabbi Yona Reiss, Av Beit Din, cRc, October 5th, 5:00 PM. Men and women are invited to attend.
Congregation KINS invites the entire community to our Simchat Torah BBQ Lunch following Hakafot and davening, Tuesday, October 22nd. Special Early Bird pricing available until October 10th. To make a prepaid reservation, visit the KINS website www.kinslegs.org.

Iida Crown Jewish Academy Placement Testing for incoming 2020 freshmen will be held on either Sunday, November 17, or Sundays, December 8 and 15. Deadline for the November testing is October 14. Please sign up now on our website at www.icja.org. Iida Crown Jewish Academy wishes everyone a Shana Tova!

The Midwest Bais Horaah of Agudath Israel of Illinois announces that its Dayan, Rabbi Shmuel Fuerst, will be delivering Shabbas Shuva Drashos on Parashas Vayelech, October 5th, at Cong. Agudas Israel-Warsaw Bikur Cholim, 3541 W. Peterson at 3:45 PM – and at the same location at 4:45 PM for men. Agudath Israel of Illinois wishes everyone a Gmar Chasima Tova.

Sukkah Fest is Thursday, October 17. Save the date for family fun, including inflatables, petting zoo, Krav Maga, British Swim School, Hot Shots Sports activities, crafts, face painting, community resource fair & more! Bernard Horwich JCC in W. Rogers Park. Register: jccchicago.org/sukkotfest.

JDBY-YTT proudly announces their Annual Grand Raffle with prizes totaling over $35,000, including a Grand Prize of $25,000! Back again this year – Buy More Win More and 3 Bonus Drawings! The deadline for the First Bonus Drawing will be October 7th for a choice of a $360 Kesher Shabbos gift card and the Grand Raffle. Order now at www.raffle.jdbyytt.org, call 773-465-8889 x625, or email raffle@jdbyytt.org for more information.

The Wi-Fi Chevra recommends that you start your day with a Good Morgan! Good Morgan Café! Located in the Wi-Fi Building on McCormick Blvd., Good Morgan offers a delicious array of breakfast and lunch specials daily. Try their delicious Belgian waffles or omelet specials! Don’t miss their famous fried whitefish sandwich and other tasty sandwiches and wraps. Open daily 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

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To sponsor Likutei Peshatim for a future Shabbos, call Naomi Samber, 847-982-2500, Fax 847-982-2507, email samber@htc.edu. Likutei Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of their son, Rabbi Joseph Fuerst, on the occasion of his seventh yahrtzeit on 9 Tishrei.

In loving memory of our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Rabbi Joseph Deitcher, on the occasion of his twenty-fourth yahrtzeit on 9 Tishrei. May his memory continue as an inspiration and comfort. - Leah Deitcher, Menahem & Linnea, Lily, Aya, Sarah, and Yossi; Zippy Neiditch, Yakov Neiditch, and Jeff and Marsha Schneiderman. May his memory be for a blessing.

By Jonathan & Yocheved Neuman and family in loving memory of our beloved father and grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel Fuerst, on the occasion of his yahrtzeit on 9 Tishrei.

In loving memory of our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Julian Neiditch, on the occasion of his seventh yahrtzeit on Yom Kippur. - By Moshe and Melanie Neiditch, Yakov Neiditch, and Jeff and Marsha Schneiderman. May his memory be for a blessing.

In loving memory of our beloved husband, father and zaydie, Rabbi Joseph Deitcher, on the occasion of his memory continue as an inspiration and comfort. - Leah Deitcher, Menahem & Linnea, Lily, Aya, Sarah, and Yossi; Zippy & Robert, Samantha & Jeremy, Rachel & Yosef, and Salyann; Didi & David, Juliet, Joseph and Reva.

By the Wolgel family in loving memory of Joseph David Wolgel, on his 19th yahrtzeit Erev Yom Kippur, 9 Tishrei. The Joseph & Edythe Wolgel Israel Scholarship Fund, established by an initial endowment from Otmin Foundation, provides young adults, 18-24, the opportunity to strengthen their Jewish identity by visiting Israel to study, work or volunteer. To donate: JUF, 30 S. Wells, Chicago, 60606.

By the Meer, Rosen, and Storz families in memory of their beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Bernard Meer, on the occasion of his thirteenth yahrtzeit on Yom Kippur, 10 Tishrei. A true mensch in every sense of the word, may his memory serve as an inspiration to us all.

In loving memory of our dear mother, bubbey, and great-bubbey, Mrs. Elaine Farr, on the occasion of her 13th yahrtzeit on 9 Tishrei. She lived a life of medinat zedek and mishpat. She showered us with love and we miss her. May her memory be for a blessing. - The Lifshitz, Farr, Belsky, Blisco, and Pickholtz, families.

Likutei Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein. May their memory be for a blessing.

**Answers:**

1. Moshe and Yehoshua were considered as kings for Bnei Yisrael. Moshe was advising Yehoshua that, similar to a king, he can’t forgo (למרות) his honor. When he is leading Bnei Yisrael he must be a strong and courageous leader and cannot be too humble.

2. Regarding the children (in Pasuk 31:13), the words הָיוּ ("all of the days") are added. This is to indicate that when children are trained to fear Hashem at a young age it will be ingrained in them and last throughout their lifetime.

3. Just as a woman can have a child and then have another, so, too, past songs of joy can happen again for Bnei Yisrael. When written in masculine form – רָשָׁא (Yeshaya 26) – it is the ultimate song of redemption, which will only happen once.

4. The Arizal said that if one stays up all night learning it would atone for any sins requiring justification.

5. The Hebrew word for «wax» is נַעַרְפָּה, which is similar to the word נוּרַפָּה (cries). On Yom Kippur we want Hashem to hear “our cries” – "יהורפ".

6. During the year, we wash our hands to remove the (evil spirit) that attaches to our hands.

7. Regarding the children (in Pasuk 31:13), the words ולְהַעֲשָׂרָה ("all of the days") are added. This is to indicate that when children are trained to fear Hashem at a young age it will be ingrained in them and last throughout their lifetime. On Yom Kippur we want Hashem to hear “our cries” – "יהורפ".