

You are all standing here in front of Hashem...to enter a covenant with Hashem (29:9-11) – The Torah begins with the plural and switches to the singular. Why? **Rav Ovadiah Yosef ztl.** noted that there is a duality to the nature of a public covenant – and whether one could annul it individually or not at all (See Y.D. 228: 30 and Shach there). Therefore although it was a national covenant (Kulchem) it was accepted individually by each member of the Jewish nation contiguously so as not to be able to be annulled until it is annulled successfully on behalf of the entire nation.

And you will return Ad (Until) Hashem (30:2) – Shouldn't the proper language be El Hashem – to Hashem? Why is the intention Ad Hashem? **Rav Schachter shlita** noted that the process of return can either imply a direction or a destination. By using the word “El” one might assume that simply turning toward the direction would be enough. This is not so, by returning Ad Hashem, the person is establishing a stated goal for his Tehuva efforts.

It isn't in heaven (30:12) – **Rav Baruch Dov Povarsky Shlita** explains that while only man has the ability to choose to listen to Hashem, the Gemara in Chagiga identifies that even Malachim can make errors in following and carrying out Hashem's commandments – this is part of the reason that even the Malachim tremble on Rosh Hashana. They too, can err. Thus, Lo BaShomayim allows man to be one step ahead and be able to outpace the punishment for erring in Halacha.

It is a close matter to you – it is in your mouth and hearts to do it (30:14) – **Ramban** learns the concept of Teshuvah from this possuk. Why does the possuk put the mouth before the heart here? Doesn't the heart need to come first? **Rav Yitzchock Sorotzkin Shlita** explains that based on **Rabbeinu Yonah's** prescription for Teshuva (1:11) those who sin inadvertently will voice their desire to change before they actually do it – as they notice the error of their ways. Thus, the Torah highlights that the matter is in the mouth first then the heart.

Gather the nation (31:12) – The final 2 Mitzvos in the Torah – Hakhel and writing a Sefer Torah both appear in the Parsha this week. **Rav Chaim Sabato Shlita** notes that the central message of these Mitzvos is that both stress the experiential aspects of the religion. **The Rambam** notes that when writing a Sefer Torah one has the unique experience of coming close to Hashem's word firsthand. Hakhel is a requirement even for those who do not understand it fully yet – the children. The reason – says the **Malbim** --- is that even being in the experience is valuable for the children and will make a lasting impression on them.

In order to listen and in order to learn (31:12) – What is the reason for bringing children? If they belong, then there is no reason to offer the Gemara's explanation that they come to give reward to those who bring them – they are needed on their own! If they aren't needed, why offer a reward for something unnecessary? **Rav Hutner ztl.** explains that Hakhel is a recreation of Maamad Har Sinai. Just as there were children then, there need to be children nw. The only way that can happen – the only way the experience can be re-created as authentically as possible, is if the children would be there. Someone has to bring them --- so the Sachar is for the help in recreating maamad Har Sinai.

Now write this song (31:19) – The **Rambam** identifies the study of Torah at night as critical to Torah mastery. He notes that man gains most of his knowledge at night (Hil. Talmud Torah 3:13). But how is this possible? The daytime and the nighttime are exactly equal! **Rav Yerucham Olshin Shlita** suggests

that there are 2 different aspects to the concepts of learning Torah – the Torah Tziva Lanu Moshe aspect and the aspect of writing the Shirah of Torah. The Tziva part occurs during the day when although having obligation to study – the burdens of daily living hold people back from fully appreciating the song of Torah. The nighttime is relatively free from the hustle and bustle of other obligations. Those are the best times for appreciating the Rinah Shel Torah. The night song of Torah is more attuned to recall based on the full experience of the Richness of Torah life.