"And all mankind passes before Thee like 'bnei mazon'." This inspiring verse from the sacred prayer crystallizes within its few words the essence of this holy day. All mankind, on this Day of Judgement, passes before the Divine Tribunal awaiting the verdict of the heavenly magistrate. Now, what are the specific charges on which we, the defendants in this cosmic trial, are brought up? What are the actual matters on which we are being tried? The author of the prayer summarizes these charges in the words 'וַלְעֹלָם'. We are being tried as 'וַלְעֹלָם'. And the Rabbis of the Talmud tell us that these words have three meanings, three interpretations, each of which symbolizes another charge against which we must defend ourselves.

The first meaning of 'וַלְעֹלָם' which the Talmud records is 'וַלְעֹלָם' a flock of sheep. We are tried as a flock of sheep. The characteristic quality of sheep is that they are gregarious, they keep together. Of all the members of the animal kingdom, they are most famous for their sociability. Other animals, too, tend to stay in groups. But none can equal the sheep in loyalty to its own society, the devotion to its fellows, in the desire to stay with its friends and not stray off alone. When we say, therefore, that mankind is judged like a flock of sheep, we mean that man is judged for his community responsibility, his devotion to his community, his loyalty to his flock. Let us add to that philosopher's thought by saying that even animals live in flocks and herds - and that G-d, too, created for Himself a 'וַלְעֹלָם' a heavenly "family" of angels. Living like a sheep in its flock, responsible to his community, is therefore man's Divine obligation. And on this day, therefore, each and every one of us is asked: how much of yourself have you given to your fellow-man? Have you been only a go-getter, or also a go-giver? How much have you done for the synagogue, and how much have you accomplished for Jewish education? How much support have you given to the agencies for Israel, and for the local philanthropies? To what extent, in short, have you acted like a loyal and responsible member of your flock?

Rabbi Tam, the famous grandson of Rashi, writes somewhere that the great mistake of Noah, the Noah of flood fame, was that he isolated & dissociated himself from his fellow men. Well aware of their evil ways and of the dire consequences to follow upon such a course, Noah built for himself an ark. Noah, the , the pious man who should have girded his loins and gone among the people and shouted far and wide that the time was at hand to stop all this crime & sin & immorality; this same Noah refused to mingle with his fellow men, he cut himself off from the community in which he lived, & he went off to a side & built a small ark to save himself. Therefore, says Rabbi Tam, was Noah punished in kind, for G-d said to him, "Noah, since you were not content to live amongst your fellow man, go now into that ark & for 40 days live with animals & beasts!" Indeed, he who will not live with his fellow man must live with worse than his fellow men.

The first charge, then, which the Divine Judge investigates this day, is Community Responsibility. 'וַלְעֹלָם' And all mankind passes before Thee like a flock of sheep.

The second meaning of 'וַלְעֹלָם', according to the Talmud, is 'וַלְעֹלָם' the "legions of the House of David", for the word 'וַלְעֹלָם' implies His Majesty, which denoted King David. G-d investigates our records this Judgement Day to see if we have lived up to the standards of the legions of King David. The traditional enemy of the Israelites of those days, you will recall, were the Philistines. The pages of the Bible are filled with tales of encounter after encounter, battle after battle, war after war between Israelites and Philistines. These two antagonistic peoples, so radically different in character, culture and tradition, were symbolized by their leaders and heroes who were similarly possessed of diametrically opposed personalities - David the Israelite and Goliath the Philistine. David, the sweet & saintly singer, sincere & sober-minded; and Goliath, the superficial, bombastic & boasting bully. Yet it must be remembered that David & Goliath were not really strangers to each other for generations before, in the days the Judges, their grandmothers were sisters-in-law. The ancestress of David was Ruth the Moabitite; the grandmother of of Goliath was Orpah. So that Ruth, in a way, was the forerunner and representative of David & his legions; whereas Orpah epitomized the Goliath-Philistine type. You will recall from the Book of Ruth that both these women were daughters-in-law to the sweet but sad...
Naomi, whose husband & 2 sons had died, leaving her bereaved & alone with Ruth & Orpah, & stranded in a strange land. Naomi bade her daughters-in-law to leave her & return home to their heathen parents, perhaps to remarry & begin a new life. Both women, we are told, protested; they wished to remain with Naomi. After some more coaxing by Naomi, however, Orpah decided to leave, but Ruth was adamant & insisted upon remaining. And here, as the ways of these two historical figures part, one wonders what it is that destined one to become the great-grandmother of a David & the other of a Goliath. Why, one wonders, was Fate so good to Ruth & so harsh on Orpah? And the answer, my friends, lies in the difference in attitude between as expressed by the Bible: וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל עַמֵּיהּ עַד כְּבִיא הָאָרֶץ וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל עַמֵּיהּ עַד כְּבִיא הָאָרֶץ. "And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, whereas Ruth clung unto her". Orpah kissed; Ruth clung. This, then, was the essential difference between the two. A very slight difference, you might say. True, but as these differences develop and unfold through the generations, the clinging of a Ruth becomes the noble passion for Truth of the legions of David; and the superficiality of Orpah, symbolized by the kiss, degenerates into the rabid and demonic wickedness of a Goliath, the lukewarm attraction becomes the very cold antipathy. Indeed, the Talmud refers to Israel as אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת - the sons of she who clung; and to the enemies of Israel as אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת - the sons of she who kissed. And ultimately, predict our Sages, אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת, the clingers prevail over the kissers, the Davids vanquish the Goliaths.

These two types, the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת and אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת, are universal types. And it is the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת who were the embodiment of אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת, the clingers in life. And on Rosh Hashana, G-d wants to know if we are of the legions of the House of David, the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת, the clingers; or of the legions of the House of Goliath, the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת.

A psychiatrist friend of mine recently told me of a case which he had and which, he insists, is typical of many others which come before him. A young child had developed some unseemly habits and had proved, on too many occasions, to be emotionally unstable. The parents of that child brought him to the doctor and asked what had caused the trouble & what could be done for him. The psychiatrist, upon examination, found that the little boy was love-starved, and this feeling of being unwanted was the basis of his fears, his insecurity and, consequently, his ugly habits. When the parents were informed of this fact, they protested bitterly. "On the contrary," cried the mother, "we show him all the love we possibly can. We buy toys for him, dress him nicely, & kiss him frequently." When pressed further for information, it was revealed that every night, the child was invariably kissed, put to bed - and left with the baby-sitter, while father & mother left for canasta or bridge or meetings. They were אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת but not אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת. They kissed, but they failed to cling. How empty and how superficial.

And no wonder, therefore, that the psychiatrists' couches are so crowded! For what I just related to you is not an isolated incident. Only recently the press carried a report by an important educator in Ontario who estimated that Canadians spend over one million dollars annually in trying to be away from their children, on such projects as baby-sitting & camps. Compare that, if you will, with the training given us by our parents & grandparents; people who, perhaps, were not as sophisticated as we, European immigrants who were unexposed to Baby-raising & Child Psychology Manuals. When they kissed a child it was a rare occasion. But in its place they gave that child unswerving devotion, undivided attention and self-sacrifice. They walked with their child to shul, they reviewed his homework with him, they gave him a tradition & a culture of which he could be proud; and they expected and got the sought for "Nachas". They were the אֲנָמָּた הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת, therefore their children were more devoted to them & more respectful towards them than children are to the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת of our days. They were clingers; they did not suffice by merely kissing their children.

In our religious life too, we have these 2 types. The אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת are ever-ready with the ubiquitous & easy expression of affection. A synagogue is a "nice" thing to have; services are "beautiful". A Talmud Torah or Day School is "important". Kashruth is a "good idea". All our Jewish institutions are treated with the saccharine sweetness symbolized by the superficial & sugar-coated kiss. But the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת, without whom these very same institutions would never exist, view these things otherwise. A synagogue is not "nice" but urgent; services are not "beautiful" but profound & soul-stirring. Jewish education is not "important" but vital, a matter of life & death. Kashruth & family purity are not "good ideas" but the very corner-stones of our faith. The אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת kiss the Mezuzah; the אֲנָמָּת הַמְּנֻקְשֵׁת cling to its precepts.
So, then, the 2nd matter for the Divine Judge to look into this day is whether we are members of David's legions, the scions of Ruth, who knew how to cling. "And all mankind passes before Thee like the legions of David, sons of she who longed ..."

The third & final interpretation of the mountain passes of the place called Beth-moron. If the first charge is that of Community Responsibility; and the second that of sincerity & genuineness versus insincerity & superficiality, then the 3rd is that of individual courage & determination, symbolized by the high mountain passes of Beth-moron. For it is never a coward who attempts to climb a mountain. It is only a man endowed with indomitable courage & vision, with an urgent & passionate desire to reach the top who undertakes to scale its perilous cliffs. It is our ability & desire, then, to scale the mountains of Life that is tested on this day.

We might, in fact, to continue the metaphor, say that there are three classes of people: the climbers, we have also the sitter & the walkers.

The SITTER is he who refuses to budge when the right path lies before him; he has not the grit, the basic & fundamental moral toughness that a person must have to be religious. Many are the avenues of religious opportunity & moral achievement that are open before him, yet he refuses to respond to the call of the open road. He sits when decency demands that he move. How did Moses put it to the tribes of Reuben & Gad? "Do you intend to sit here while your brothers go off to war?" In times of moral strife, the sitter sits it out.

The WALKER is he who is ready to tread on the beckoning paths of life, but he cannot blaze his own trail. He will advance on the avenues of ethical accomplishment, but only if he is promised that they are well paved, well protected, well-banked, and level. And when the forces of Good & Evil are joined in battle, he will not "sit it out"; he will fight for his principles - but he will only follow, he will not lead. The walker will not sit; but neither will he climb.

The CLIMBERS of life are those for whom no task is too difficult. Once he has seen the summit high above him, the climber will allow no obstacle to prevent his rise to the top. Once his mind is set, he will blaze his own trail & pursue his task with courage & determination. He will push frontiers, extend horizons & open new vistas. Overwhelming moves mean nothing to him, & adversity only challenges him to greater deeds. Do you recall the report the Meraglim brought to Moses after their reconnaissance patrol in Canaan? It was a land of giants, a land of fortified cities, a land which destroys its inhabitants. Yet among those twelve men were two who were not pessimists & they said: "We must go up, arise, at once & possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. Such words could be spoken only by climbers.

The SITTERS are those who are classified as on Rosh Hashana, those whose doom is sealed. About them our Rabbis say: "Wherever you find much "sitting", there Satan is active..."
The WALKERS are the middle level on the scale of righteousness. They are the ones for whom Rosh Hashana solves no problems & are given suspended sentences until Yom Kippur. The Walker, like the Biblical Chanoch, leaves no permanent mark upon the world, for when he leaves, he simply vanishes. Like Chanoch he is a decent chap & a moral person, but when the end comes, he is simply consigned to oblivion. The CLIMBERS are the , the righteous, whose verdict today is clearly for a good life. Like Abraham who arose from Egypt - the climber, disgusted with the immorality of his Egypt-like spiritual lowlands, rises to an Israel & climbs to the top of Mt. Moriah, there to commune with his G-d. The climber is like Moses, who , he constantly scales the mountains of the Lord. Like David, his life is so restless, so brimming with that energy & desire to climb that comes from the love of the sacred & holy in life, that daily he says: "I lift my eyes to the mountains". For there are always mountains to climb. And like Elijah, whose immortal epithet will forever be , he went up in a whirlwind to Heaven, the climber is even ready to die climbing.

* For it was - Chanoch walked with G-d; He only walked, he didn't climb.
My friends, on this Rosh Hashana Day, we must prove to G-d that we are determined to scale the mountains of our spiritual and religious lives, like true mountain climbers, not as sitters or walkers. On this day when we conceive of G-d as higher and higher, we must rise to get closer to Him. We are bidden to outdo ourselves, for we know that if Man will not be more than human — then he must be less than human.

"And all mankind passes before Thee like 'bnei maron'!" On this Yom Hadin we must acquit ourselves of these three charges. We must prove that like the flock, we have been loyal members of the community. We must be able to identify ourselves with the Legions of the House of David, those whose sincerity, profundity & genuineness were beyond question. And we must prove that we are capable of scaling ; that we are, as individuals, not sitters or walkers, but true climbers, courageous & persistent advocates of the highest & loftiest of Jewish ideals.

The prosecution may file heavy & voluminous briefs. The spectators may be skeptical of the outcome of the great trial. But the defence can yet achieve victory if, before it rests, it offers the solemn promise that it will rectify what needs rectification and henceforth live according to the noble precepts of the Torah. We hope and pray that the verdict of the Divine Tribunal will be NOT GUILTY — and a a year of life & blessing, peace & prosperity. Amen.

Note: It independent counsel modef.

Sitters, Walkers, Climbers — and, in Walkers (meaning 'Lifeguard') that he was lukewarm, running & not running, & that's why I'd took him. An exact text, see 21:06, 22:06.