

חובות הלבבות • שער חשבון הנפש • פרק שלישי

Sentence by Sentence • Punctuated Hebrew with Translation and Notes • Navy & Gold Edition

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This third Perek of Shaar Cheshbon HaNefesh is going to lay out for us thirty different ways a Yid can do a cheshbon hanefesh, an accounting with himself, regarding his duties to Hashem. The Chovos HaLevavos is going to start us off with the first five of these profound considerations.

We'll begin by contemplating our very existence and how Hashem elevated us above all other creations. Then, we'll delve into the incredible gift of our physical body and the even greater gift of our intellect. Finally, we'll explore our immense debt of gratitude for the holy Torah and the obligation to delve into its depths.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

אָבֵל עַל כַּמָּה פָּנִים יִהְיֶה חֶשְׁבוֹן הָאָדָם עִם נַפְשׁוֹ לֵאלֹהִים יִתְעַלֶּה, אוֹמֵר כִּי אָפְנִי הַחֶשְׁבוֹן רַבִּים בְּעֵינַי הִזָּה; אִךְ אֲבֹאֵר מֵהֶם שְׁלֹשִׁים פָּנִים, יִתְבָּאֵר מֵהֶם מָה שֶׁהָאָדָם חַיֵּב בּוֹ לֵאלֹהִים, כְּשֶׁנוֹתֵן אוֹתָם אֵל לְבוֹ וּמִקְבֵּל עַל נַפְשׁוֹ לַחֲשֹׁב בָּהֶם וּלְזָכֹר אוֹתָם תָּמִיד:

Regarding the many ways a person should reckon with his soul concerning his duties to Hashem Yisbarach, I will say that there are numerous approaches to this accounting; however, I will explain thirty of them, through which it will become clear what a person owes to Hashem, when he takes them to heart and accepts upon himself to reflect on them and remember them always.

הָרֵאשׁוֹן: כְּשִׁיסְתַּכֵּל הָאָדָם בְּעֵינָיו עֲצָמוֹ, וְיַחֲשֹׁב בְּתַחֲלֵת הַיּוֹתוֹ וַיִּצְיָאֵתוֹ מִלֹּא מִצִּיּוֹאָה אֶל מִצִּיּוֹאָה, וְהִעֲתִיקָתוֹ מֵאִין לִישׁ, לֹלֵא יִתְרוֹן שְׁקָדָם לוֹ, אִךְ חֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים וְטוֹבוֹ וְנִדְבָתוֹ; וְיִרְאֶה בְּשִׁכְלוֹ כִּי הוּא חָשׁוּב בְּעֵינָיו וְנִשָּׂא בְּמִדְרָגָתוֹ וּמַעֲלָה בְּמִתְכַּנְּתוֹ מִן הַבְּהֵמָה וְהַצֶּמַח וְהַמּוֹצֵק, יִתְחַיֵּב לְהוֹדוֹת לְבוֹרָאוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

The first way: When a person reflects on his own being, and considers the very beginning of his existence, his emergence from non-existence to existence, and his transition from nothingness to something, without any prior merit on his part, but solely due to Hashem's pure kindness, goodness, and generosity; and when he perceives with his intellect that he is more significant in his essence, more elevated in his stature, and more refined in his form than animals, plants, and inanimate objects, he will become obligated to thank his Creator, blessed be He.

וַיִּמְשַׁל בְּזֶה מָשָׁל קָרוֹב: יַעֲלֶה בְּמַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֵלּוּ בַּעֲת יְנוּקוֹתוֹ הַשְּׁלִיכְתּוֹ אִמּוֹ בְּמִסְלָה, וְעֵבֶר אָדָם אֶחָד וְרָאָה אוֹתוֹ וְחָמַל עָלָיו, וְאַסָּף אוֹתוֹ אֶל בֵּיתוֹ וְנִטְפַּל בְּגִדּוֹלוֹ עַד אֲשֶׁר גָּדַל וְהִשְׁכִּיל; הֵיאֵךְ הָיָה חַיֵּב לְרוּץ לְרִצּוֹנוֹ, וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶהוּ בּוֹ וַיִּזְהִירָהוּ מִמֶּנּוּ, וְכַמָּה הוּא חַיֵּב לוֹ מִן הַחֻבּוֹת!

Let him consider a close analogy for this: Let him imagine that in his infancy, his mother abandoned him on the road, and a man passed by, saw him, took pity on him, brought him into his home, and cared for his upbringing until he grew and matured in intellect; how obligated would he be to eagerly fulfill his will, and everything he commanded him and warned him against, and how many debts would he owe him!

וְכַפִּי הַגָּנֹת הַבוֹרָא עָלָיו וְהַסְפָּקָתוֹ בְּכָל עֵינָיו, צָרִיךְ שִׁיְהִיָּה הַמְּשָׁכוֹ אַחֵר עֲבוּדָתוֹ וְקִבּוּלוֹ מִצְוָתוֹ.

And corresponding to the Creator's protection over him and His provision for all his needs, so too should be his drawing towards His service and his acceptance of His commandments.

וּכְבֹּר הוֹכִיחַ הַנְּבִיא הָאֵמָּה בְּעֵינֵי הָזֶה בְּאָמְרוֹ (דְּבָרִים ל"ב): "הֲלֹה' תִּגְמְלוּ זֹאת עִם נָבֵל וְלֹא חָכָם וְגוֹי";
וּבְאֵר יִחְזָקָאל (יחזקאל טו) בִּפְי: "וְאָעֵבֶר עָלֶיךָ וְאָרְאֶה מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמֶּיךָ וּשְׂאָר הָעֵנִינִי".

And the prophet already rebuked the nation concerning this matter, as it says (Devarim 32): "Is this how you repay Hashem, you disgraceful, unwise people, etc."; and Yechezkel explained this (Yechezkel 15) in the parsha: "And I passed by you, and saw you wallowing in your own blood," and the rest of the matter.

וְהַשְׁנִי: חֲשׁוֹבֵן הָאָדָם עִם נַפְשׁוֹ בְּגִדְל טוֹבוֹת הָאֱלֹהִים עָלָיו בְּחִבּוּר גּוּפוֹ וְהַשְׁלֵמַת צוּרְתוֹ וּמַהוּתוֹ (ס"א וּמִינּוּתוֹ) וְתִבְנִית אֲבָרָיו, וְהוֹצָאתוֹ מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ בִּיכְלָתוֹ יִתְבָּרָה, וְהַכְנַת טְרַפּוֹ קֹדֶם לָזֶה וְאַחֲרָיו כְּפִי הָרְאוּי לוֹ וּכְשֶׁעוֹר צָרְכוֹ – חֶסֶד מְאֻלְהָיו עָלָיו.

The second way: A person's accounting with his soul regarding the immense kindness of Hashem upon him in forming his body, perfecting his shape, his essence (or his species), and the structure of his limbs, and bringing him forth from his mother's womb through His blessed power, and preparing his sustenance both before and after this, as is fitting for him and according to his needs – all this is an act of kindness from his Hashem upon him.

וַיַּחֲשֹׁב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ אֵלּוּ הָיָה חֶסֶד בְּתַחֲלִית בְּרִיאָתוֹ מִכְּלִי עֵינַיִם אוֹ יָדַיִם אוֹ רַגְלַיִם, וַיִּהְיֶה בִּיכְלָת אָדָם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם לוֹ עַד שְׁיִהְיֶה גּוּפוֹ שָׁלֵם בָּהֶם; הֵיכָּךְ תִּהְיֶה הוֹדָאתוֹ לוֹ וְשִׁבְחוֹ וְהַמְשָׁכּוֹ לְמַצְוֹת וְהַדְּבָקוֹ בְּעִבּוּדָתוֹ?

Let him consider in his soul: if, at the beginning of his creation, he had lacked eyes, hands, or feet, and it was within a man's power to make them for him so that his body would be complete with them; how great would be his gratitude and praise to that man, and his drawing to fulfill his command and cling to his service?

וּכְפִי זֶה צָרִיךְ שְׁיִמְשֹׁךְ אַחֵר בּוֹרְאוֹ יִתְבָּרָה, אֲשֶׁר תִּקַּן גּוּפוֹ וְהַשְׁלִים אֲבָרָיו כְּלָם בְּתַכְלִית הַתְקוּן וְהַתְכוּן, כְּמוֹ שְׂאֵמֶר (איוב י'): "זָכַר נָא כִּי כַחֲמֵר עָשִׂיתִנִּי וְגוֹ' וּשְׂאָר הָעֵנִינִי"; וְאָמַר (תהלים קל"ט): "כִּי אַתָּה קִנִּיתָ כְּלִיָּתִי"; וְאָמַר (שם כ"ב): "כִּי אַתָּה גָחִי מִבֶּטֶן".

Correspondingly, one should be drawn after his blessed Creator, Who fashioned his body and perfected all his limbs with ultimate rectification and order, as it says (Iyov 10): "Remember now that You made me like clay, etc., and the rest of the matter"; and it says (Tehilim 139): "For You created my reins"; and it says (Tehilim 22): "For You drew me from the womb."

וְהַשְׁלִישִׁי: חֲשׁוֹבֵן הָאָדָם עִם נַפְשׁוֹ וְהַסְתַּכְלוֹ בְּגִדְל טוֹבוֹת הָאֱלֹהִים עָלָיו בְּמָה שֶׁהוֹעִילוֹ מִן הַשֶּׁכֶל וְהַהֲפָרָה עִם הָרִבָּה מִדּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְחִמּוּדוֹת וְנִכְבְּדוֹת.

The third way: A person's accounting with his soul and his contemplation of the immense kindness of Hashem upon him, in that He bestowed upon him intellect and understanding, along with many good, desirable, and honorable character traits.

יֵשׁ לוֹ בָּהֶם יִתְרוֹן עַל הַחַיִּים שְׂאֵינָם מְדַבְּרִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (איוב ל"ה): "מִלִּפְנֵי מִבְּהֵמוֹת אֶרֶץ וּמֵעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יִחְכְּמוּנוּ".

Through these, he has an advantage over the irrational creatures, as it is written (Iyov 35): "Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the fowls of heaven."

וַיַּחֲשֹׁב אֵלּוּ הָיָה עִירָם מִן הַשֶּׁכֶל וְהַהֲפָרָה, וְהוֹעִילוֹ בָּהֶם אָדָם כְּמוֹהוּ, וְהִכִּיר יִתְרוֹן מָה שֶׁהוּא בּוֹ עַל מָה שֶׁהָיָה בּוֹ; הֲהִיָּה מִסְפִּיק לוֹ כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו וּמִדַּת יָמָיו לִהְיוֹת מְתַמֵּד בְּהוֹדָאתוֹ וְשִׁבְחוֹ עַל זֶה תַּחַת גְּמוּלוֹ?

And let him consider: if he were devoid of intellect and understanding, and a man like himself helped him attain them, and he then recognized the advantage he had gained over his previous state; would all the days of his life and the measure of his days be sufficient for him to constantly express his gratitude and praise for this, in return for his benefactor's kindness?

כָּל שָׁכֵן הַבוֹרָא יִתְבָּרָה, אֲשֶׁר אֵין קֵץ לְטוֹבוֹתָיו עָלֵינוּ וְלֹא תִכְלִית לַחֲסָדָיו עִמָּנוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (תהלים מ):
"רַבּוֹת עֲשִׂיתָ אֵתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵי וגו'".

How much more so the blessed Creator, Whose kindnesses to us are without end, and Whose mercies towards us have no limit, as it is written (Tehilim 40): "Many, O Hashem my G-d, are Your wonderful works which You have done, etc."

וְהִרְבִּיעִי: חֲשׁוֹנוֹ עִם נַפְשׁוֹ בְּגִדְל טוֹבוֹת הָאֱלֹהִים עָלָיו בְּהַעֲרָתוֹ אֶל מָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ חַיּוּתוֹ בְּשָׁנֵי הָעוֹלָמִים –
בְּתוֹרָה נִכְבְּדָת נְאֻמָּנָה, לְהַסִּיר עוֹרוֹנוֹ וּלְבַעַר סִכְלוֹתוֹ, וּלְהַאֲוִיר עֵינָיו וּלְהַקְרִיבוֹ אֶל רְצוֹן אֱלֹהָיו, וְתוֹדִיעָנוּ
אֲמִתַּת בּוֹרָאוֹ וּמָה שֶׁהוּא חַיֵּב לוֹ, אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ תִשְׁלַם הַצְלָחַתוֹ בְּשָׁנֵי הָעוֹלָמִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (שם יט): "תוֹרַת
ה' תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ וגו' פְּקוּדֵי ה' יִשְׁרִים מְשֻׁמְחֵי לֵב וגו'".

The fourth way: His accounting with his soul regarding the immense kindness of Hashem upon him in awakening him to that which brings him life in both worlds – the exalted and faithful Torah – to remove his blindness, eradicate his ignorance, enlighten his eyes, bring him closer to the will of his Hashem, and make known to him the truth of his Creator's existence and what he owes Him, through which his success in both worlds will be perfected, as it is written (Tehilim 19): "The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul, etc., the precepts of Hashem are right, rejoicing the heart, etc."

וַיַּחֲשֹׁב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ אֵלּוּ הֵיחָתָה נַעֲדָרַת מַמְנוֹ אַחֵר שֶׁהִכִּיר מַעֲלָתָהּ, וְאַחֲ"כ נִזְדַּמֵּן לוֹ אָדָם שֶׁהוֹעִילוֹ בָּהּ; הֵהִיחָתָה
רְאוּיָהּ הַשְׁתַּדְּלוּתוֹ וַיְכַלְתּוּ מִסַּפְקַת לְהַשְׁלִים הוֹדָאָתוֹ וּשְׁבָחוֹ עַל זֶה?

And let him consider in his soul: if it had been absent from him, after he recognized its greatness, and afterwards a person came along and bestowed it upon him; would his efforts and abilities be sufficient to fully express his gratitude and praise for this?

וְכ"ש הַבוֹרָא הַמַּעֲוִיר בָּהּ וְהַמַּפְיֵק לְהִבְנָתָהּ וְהַעוֹזֵר לוֹ עָלֶיהָ, וְהַמַּעֲט מִמָּה שֶׁאָנוּ חַיִּבִּים לוֹ מִן הַהוֹדָאָה
עָלֶיהָ הוּא שֶׁנֶּרוּץ לְהִדְבֵּק בְּתוֹרָתוֹ, וְנִמְהָר לְקַבֵּל מִצְוֹתָיו וְהִזְהָרָתוֹ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (שם קיט): "חֲשַׁשְׁתִּי וְלֹא
הִתְמַהֲמַהֲתִי וגו'"; וְאָמַר (שם): "מָה אֶהְבֵּתִי תוֹרָתְךָ"; וְאָמַר (שם): "מָה נִמְלָצוּ לִחֲכִי אִמְרָתְךָ".

How much more so the Creator, Who awakens him to it, enables him to understand it, and helps him fulfill it! The least of what we owe Him in gratitude for it is to eagerly cling to His Torah, and to hasten to accept the obligation of His commandments and His warnings, as it is written (Tehilim 119): "I hastened and did not delay, etc."; and it says (there): "How I love Your Torah"; and it says (there): "How sweet are Your words to my palate."

וְהַחֲמִישִׁי: שֶׁיַּחֲשֹׁב עִם נַפְשׁוֹ בְּהִתְאַחֲרוֹ מִהֲבִין סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים, וּמִנּוּחַת נַפְשׁוֹ מִבְּלָתִי עֲמֵד עַל עֲנִיָּנוֹ.

The fifth way: That he should reckon with his soul concerning his delay in understanding the book of Hashem's Torah, and his soul's contentment with not delving into its matters.

וְאֵינָנו עוֹשֶׂה כֵּן בְּסֵפֶר שֶׁיִּגִּיעָהוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ, אִם הוּא מְסַפֵּק בְּהִבְנָתוֹ מִפְּנֵי הַדְּמוּת הַכְּתִיבָה אוֹ הַמְּלוּת, אוֹ
לְעֵמֶק עֲנִיָּנוֹ וְדִקּוּתָם וְהִתְעַרְבוּתָם וְצָחוֹת דְּבָרָיו; אֲבָל הֵיחָתָה נֹתֵן כָּל לְבוֹ וְשִׁכְלוֹ בּוֹ לְעֲמֹד עַל עֲנִיָּנוֹ, וְהֵיחָתָה
מִצְטָעַר צָעַר גָּדוֹל עַד שֶׁיִּבִּין כּוֹנֵנָתוֹ בּוֹ.

He would not act this way with a book sent to him from a king, if he were in doubt about its meaning due to unclear handwriting or words, or due to the depth of its matters, their subtlety, their intermingling, or the eloquence of its words; rather, he would apply his whole heart and mind to understand its matters, and would exert himself greatly until he grasped its intention.

וְכִשְׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה זֶה לַעֲמֹד עַל סֵפֶר אָדָם חָלֹשׁ וּבֶן תְּמוּתָה כְּמוֹהוּ, מָה הוּא חַיֵּב לַעֲשׂוֹת מִכִּפְּלֵי זֶה עַד שְׂיָבִין סֵפֶר אֱלֹהֵיו, אֲשֶׁר הוּא חַיָּיו וְהַצָּלָתוֹ, כַּמִּיָּשׁ (דְּבָרִים ל'): "כִּי הוּא חַיָּיו וְאֶרֶץ זְמִידָהּ וְגוֹ"?

And if he does this to understand the book of a weak, mortal man like himself, how much more is he obligated to do many times more than this until he understands the book of his Hashem, which is his life and his salvation, as it is written (Devarim 30): "For it is your life and the length of your days, etc."?

וְהִיאָה הַתִּרְתָּ לַעֲצָמָה, אָחִי, לְהִתְעַלֵּם מִמֶּנּוּ, וּלְהִסְתַּפֵּק לָהּ מִמֶּנּוּ מָה שֶׁהוּא קָרוֹב מֵעֲנִיָּנוּ וְנִגְלָה מִפְּשׁוּטוֹ, וְתִקַּל בְּזוּלָתוֹ?

And how did you permit yourself, my brother, to ignore it, and to be content with only what is readily familiar of its matter and apparent from its simple meaning, and to treat the rest lightly?

הֲלֹא תִרְאֶה חֲסִרוּנָהּ וּפְחִיתוּתָהּ בְּדִבְרֵי הַזֶּה!

Do you not see your own deficiency and lowliness in this matter?

הֲלֹא זֶה דּוֹמֶה לְמַעֲשֵׂה מִי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בּוֹ (דְּנִיאל ה'): "וְלֹא־לֹהִי כִסְפָּא וְדָהָבָא נְחָשָׁא פְּרֻזְלָא וְגוֹי' וְלֹא־לֹהִיא דִּי נִשְׁמַתָּה בִּידָהּ וְכָל אֲרֻחָתָהּ לֹה לָא הִדְרָתָהּ".

Is this not similar to the story of one about whom it was said (Daniel 5): "And to the gods of silver and gold, copper, iron, etc., and to the Hashem in Whose hand is your soul, and all your paths are His, you did not give honor"?

וְהַשְּׂשִׁי: שִׁיחֲשָׁב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ כִּשְׁהוּא מְרַגֵּשׁ בְּמַדּוּתָיו שֶׁהֵן נוֹטוֹת לְהִמָּרוֹת הַבּוֹרָא וּלְהִפָּר בְּרִיתוֹ, וְיִחֲשָׁב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ וְיַעֲבִיר עַל לְבוֹ כָּל מָה שֶׁהַשִּׁיג בַּחוּשָׁיו מִשְׁרָשֵׁי הָעוֹלָם וְעֲנָפָיו וּפְשׁוּטוֹ וּמְרָכָבוֹ וְעֵלְיוֹנוֹ וְתַחְתּוֹנוֹ, שֶׁכָּלֹו עוֹמֵד בְּדִבְרֵי ה' וְשׁוֹמֵר בְּרִית ה'.

The sixth way: That he should consider in his soul, when he feels his character traits inclining to rebel against the Creator and to break His covenant, and he should reflect in his soul and bring to his heart all that he perceives with his senses from the roots and branches of the world, its simple and complex parts, its upper and lower realms, that all of it stands by the word of Hashem and keeps the covenant of Hashem.

הֲאֵם רָאָה מִמֶּנּוּ דִּבְרֵי יוֹצֵא מִקֶּשֶׁר עֲבוּדַת הָאֵל יִתְעַלֶּה, אוֹ שֶׁמִּמָּרָה דִּבְרוּ וּמִפָּר בְּרִיתוֹ?

Has he ever seen anything from it that deviates from the bond of serving the exalted Hashem, or that rebels against His word and breaks His covenant?

וְאִלּוּ הָיִינוּ מַעֲלִים בְּמַחֲשַׁבְתָּנוּ שֶׁדִּבְרֵי מַהֵם עֶבֶר בְּרִית הַבּוֹרָא וְנִשְׁתַּנָּה טַבְּעוֹ, אוֹ שֶׁהָאָרֶץ סָרָה מִן הָאֲמֻצָּע וְיִצְאוּ מִי הַיָּם וְעִבְרוּ גְבוּלָם וְכִסּוּ פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ – הֲהִיָּה אָדָם נִשְׁאָר עַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה?

And if we were to imagine that any of them broke the Creator's covenant and changed its nature, or that the earth deviated from its center, and the waters of the sea overflowed their boundaries and covered the face of the earth – would any human being remain on the face of the earth?

ויותר נפלא מזה באברי האדם: אלו היו עוברים ברית הבורא באדם, וינוחו אבריו הטבועים על התנועה, או ינועו הנחים מהם, או אם לא היו מגיעים אליו החושים מה שנצטוו להגיע אליו – היה חבורו נפסד והרכבתו נתקת ופטלה הנהגתו.

Even more wondrous than this is regarding a person's limbs: if they were to break the Creator's covenant within a person, and his limbs that are naturally meant for movement were to rest, or those that are meant to rest were to move, or if his senses did not convey to him what they were commanded to convey – his composition would be corrupted, his structure would be severed, and his functioning would cease.

והאיה לא יתביש האדם לעבר ברית אלהיו בעולם שלא עבר ברית אלהים בו, ובעוזרים שחיכם בעבודתו וסבל כל ענינו, והם אבריו?

And how can a person not be ashamed to break the covenant of his Hashem in a world where Hashem's covenant has not been broken, and with the helpers whom He obligated in His service and to bear all his affairs, namely his own limbs?

והדמיון הקרוב בזה למלך שצוה כת אחת מעבדיו להעביר אחד משריו נהר גדול בתכלית השמירה אל מקום ידוע וזמן קצוב, ואח"כ צוה המלך להשר לעשות להם בענין ההוא ובזמן ההוא דברים ידועים; וקימו העבדים בהשר מצות המלך, והתעלם השר ממה שצוהו בו המלך להם.

The close analogy for this is to a king who commanded a group of his servants to transport one of his ministers across a great river with utmost care to a specific place and at a set time; and afterwards, the king commanded the minister to do certain things for them at that time and in that matter; and the servants fulfilled the king's command regarding the minister, but the minister ignored what the king had commanded him concerning them.

ואמר לו אחד מן העבדים: השר המתעלם ממצות המלך, הלא תירא שיעשה אחד ממנו בך כמעשהו, ויעבר מצות המלך בשמירתך כמו שעברת בנו, ותפול בנהר הגדול הזה ותמות מיתה רעה?

And one of the servants said to him: 'O minister who ignores the king's command, do you not fear that one of us will do to you as you have done, and transgress the king's command regarding your protection, just as you transgressed against us, and you will fall into this great river and die a terrible death?'

חזר מטעותך בתשובה ובקשת המחילה, כי המלך צוה אותנו שנתעלם משמירתך אם תתעלם ממצותו עלינו, והקיץ מהתעלמותו וחזר מטעותו.

'Return from your error with teshuvah and a request for forgiveness, for the king commanded us to neglect your protection if you neglect his command to us.' And he awoke from his negligence and repented from his error.

ואתה, אחי, חשוב אם עבר אחד מאברייך על מצות הבורא בך בהשתמשך בו; הלא אתה יודע כי הבורא יתברך התנה בתורתו הנאמנה שיהיה ברשותך ובחפצך כל מה שבעולם אם תעבדהו, ושיעבור על רצונה כשתעבור על דברו, כמו שהוא מבאר בפרשת אם בחקותי תלכו וזולתה.

And you, my brother, consider: if one of your limbs transgressed the Creator's command concerning you in your use of it; do you not know that the blessed Creator stipulated in His faithful Torah that everything in the world would be at your disposal and according to your will if you serve Him, and that it would go against your will when you transgress His word, as is explained in Parashas Im Bechukosai Telechu and other places?

וְהִשְׁבִּיעִי: חֲשׁוֹן הָאָדָם עִם נַפְשׁוֹ לֹאֵלֹהֵיו בְּתַנָּאֵי הָעֲבָדוּת, וְשִׁקְבָּל עַל עֲצָמוֹ חוּבוֹת הָאֲדָנוּת לְבוֹרָאוֹ; וְכִבֵּר זְכָרְנוֹ רַבָּם בְּשַׁעַר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי מִן הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה, יְדַרְשֵׁם הַמְּבַקֵּשׁ שָׁמָּה.

The seventh way: A person's accounting with his soul before his Hashem regarding the conditions of servitude, and that he should accept upon himself the obligations of mastership towards his Creator; and we have already mentioned most of them in the third chapter of this book, where the seeker may find them.

וַיִּחְשַׁב עִם נַפְשׁוֹ עָלֵיהֶן בְּעֵת שִׁיכִיר הַתְּמִיד טוֹבוֹת הַבוֹרָא יִתְפַּרֵּךְ עָלָיו בְּהִזְמִינוֹ תוֹעֲלוֹתָיו וְחֻמָּתָיו עָלָיו וְהִסְפִּיקוּ כָּל הַצָּרִיךְ לוֹ מִן הַמְּזוֹן תָּדִיר, וְלֹא הִנִּיחוֹ לְנַפְשׁוֹ וְלַחֲלִישׁוֹת הַכֶּרֶת בְּהִנְהָגוֹת עֲנִיָּנוֹ, וְהוֹעִילוֹ בְּחֻמָּה וּבְשִׁכָּל וּבְבִינָה יִנְהִיג בָּהֶם עֲנִיָּנוֹ וַיַּדַּע חוּבוֹת אֱלֹהָיו עָלָיו, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר דָּוִד ע"ה (תהלים קיט): "עֲבָדְךָ אֲנִי הַבִּינִנִּי."

And he should reflect upon them in his soul when he recognizes the continuous kindnesses of the blessed Creator upon him, in providing his needs, having mercy on him, and constantly supplying him with all necessary sustenance; and that He did not abandon him to his own devices and the weakness of his understanding in managing his affairs, but rather helped him with wisdom, intellect, and insight, through which he can manage his affairs and know his obligations to his Hashem, as Dovid HaMelech, peace be upon him, said (Tehilim 119): "I am Your servant; give me understanding."

וְכַשִּׁיכִיר הָעֶבֶד מֵאֲדָנָיו סִמְנֵי טוֹבוֹתָיו הָעוֹדְפוֹת בְּנַפְשׁוֹ וּגּוּפוֹ וְכָל תְּנוּעוֹתָיו, וְשֶׁהוּא מְשַׁקִּיף עָלָיו תָּמִיד וַיִּדַּע נִגְלוֹתָיו וְנִסְתָּרוֹתָיו וְשׁוֹמֵר עַל כָּל תְּנוּעוֹתָיו וְקוֹשֵׁר אוֹתָם בְּאֶסְרוֹ וּמוֹשֵׁל בָּהֶם וְצוֹרֵת נ

And when the servant recognizes from his Master the signs of His abundant kindnesses upon his soul, his body, and all his movements, and that He constantly watches over him, knows his revealed and hidden actions, guards all his movements, binds them with His restraints, and rules over them, and the form of the soul...

WHAT TO TAKE FROM IT

The Chovos HaLevavos begins by presenting thirty ways to do a cheshbon hanefesh. The first way is to reflect on our creation from nothing, our elevated status above other creations, and Hashem's constant care, which obligates us to thank Him. The second is to consider the perfect composition of our body and limbs, a kindness that demands our service. The third is to recognize the gift of intellect and understanding, which gives us superiority over animals and obligates us to Hashem. The fourth is to account for the gift of Torah, which guides us to life in both worlds and obligates us to cling to it. The fifth is to do a cheshbon on our delay in understanding Hashem's Torah and our contentment with a superficial grasp, contrasting it with how we would treat a king's letter.

The Chovos HaLevavos here is teaching us a fundamental principle of avodas Hashem: that our entire spiritual life, our very existence, is built on **hakaras hatov**. It's not just a nice middah; it's the bedrock. The Gemara in Brachos (35a) says, "Assur lo l'adam sheyeheneh min ha'olam hazeh b'lo bracha" – it's forbidden to enjoy this world without a bracha. Why? Because a bracha is our way of acknowledging Hashem as the source of all good. It's our *hakaras hatov*. The Chovos HaLevavos takes this idea and expands it, showing us that every aspect of our being, from our very creation to our physical body, our intellect, and especially the Torah itself, is a gift from Hashem that demands our deepest gratitude.

Think about the *meshal* the Chovos HaLevavos brings: if a stranger saved you as an infant, you'd feel indebted to him for life. How much more so to Hashem, who not only created you from nothing, but sustains you every moment, gave you a perfect body, a brilliant mind, and the Torah to guide you to eternal life! We often take these things for granted, but the Chovos HaLevavos is telling us to stop and **think**. To make a **cheshbon hanefesh** – an accounting – of these incredible gifts. When we truly internalize this, it transforms our relationship with Hashem from one of obligation to one of profound love and desire to serve Him.

This isn't just about saying "thank you." It's about living a life that reflects that gratitude. Just like the adopted child would run to do his benefactor's will, we too should be eager to fulfill Hashem's mitzvos. When we feel a lack of enthusiasm for Torah or mitzvos, it's often because we've forgotten the source of these blessings. We've lost sight of the immense kindness Hashem has showered upon us. Reconnecting with that *hakaras hatov* is the key to reigniting our passion for avodas Hashem.

So, for today, take a moment to consciously thank Hashem for one specific gift you usually take for granted – perhaps your eyesight, your ability to learn, or even just the air you breathe. Let that feeling of gratitude motivate you in your avodah.