

חובות הלבבות • שער חשבון הנפש • פרק ששי

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

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In Shaar Cheshbon HaNefesh, Chapter Six, Rabbeinu Bachya delves into the profound impact of a pure soul and clear intellect on one's avodas Hashem. We'll explore how a person's inner spiritual state directly influences their ability to engage in true self-accounting and fulfill Hashem's mitzvos.

The chapter emphasizes that when one's intentions are l'shem Shamayim, Hashem helps them achieve a deep understanding of truth and wisdom. This leads to inner tranquility, joy in avodas Hashem, and a profound connection to the Creator, ultimately reaching the highest levels of yiras Shamayim and dveikus.

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

אבל מה שצריך לסמוך לחשבון עם הנפש מן המעשים, אומר כי זה יהיה מן האדם כפי זכות עצם נפשו וקבולה לאורי האמת המגיעים אליה מאת אלהים יתברך.

Regarding what actions need to follow this accounting with the soul, I will say that this will depend on a person's purity of soul and its receptiveness to the lights of truth that reach it from Hashem, blessed be He.

כי כאשר יהיה שכל המחשב עם נפשו החשבון הזה זה, ויבין הכוונה והחפץ בו, וייוחד לבו בו לאלהים יתברך – יפיק רצון הבורא יתברך.

For when the intellect of one who performs this accounting with his soul is pure, and he understands the intention and desire behind it, and he dedicates his heart to it solely for Hashem, blessed be He, he will find favor in the eyes of the Creator, blessed be He.

ויעזרהו לעשות מצותיו, ויורה אותו באור החכמה, ויזהיר בזהר השכל, ויזה נגלהו ונסתרו לאלהים, ודומה למה שאמר איוב (איוב כט): "צדק לבשתי וילבשני וגו'".

Hashem will help him to perform His mitzvos, guide him with the light of wisdom, illuminate him with the radiance of intellect, and purify his revealed and hidden aspects for Hashem, resembling what Iyov said (Iyov 29:14): "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me, etc."

ואז תשקט ותנוח מחשבתו מדאגות העולם ושכיותיו, וישמח בעבודת הבורא יתברך, ויגיל במה שהשקיה עליו מסודות החכמה ומאוריה.

And then his thoughts will quiet and rest from the worries of the world and its desires, and he will rejoice in the avodah of the Creator, blessed be He, and delight in what he has perceived from the secrets of wisdom and its lights.

ויאשר נפשו על מה שהגיע אליו מידיעת אמתת העולם התחתון והעולם העליון, ומחשבת האלהים הטובה והנהגתו, וקיום גזרתו בבירותיו.

He will consider his soul fortunate for what it has attained: knowledge of the truth of the lower world and the upper world, Hashem's good plan and His conduct, and the fulfillment of His decrees upon His creations.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר דָּוִד עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם (תהלים סד): "יִשְׂמַח צַדִּיק בְּה' וְחָסָה בּוֹ", וְאָמַר (שם קה): "יִשְׂמַח לֵב מְבַקְשֵׁי ה'", וְאָמַר (ירמיהו ט:כ"ג): "אֵל יִתְהַלֵּל חֶכְם בְּחִכְמָתוֹ וְגוֹ", וְאָמַר (שם): "כִּי אִם בְּזֹאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל הַשֶּׁכֶּל וַיֵּדַע אוֹתִי".

Just as Dovid HaMelech, alav haShalom, said (Tehilim 64:11): "The righteous shall rejoice in Hashem and take refuge in Him"; and he said (Tehilim 105:3): "Let the heart of those who seek Hashem rejoice"; and it says (Yirmiya 9:22-23): "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, etc."; and it says (there): "But let him that glories, glory in this: that he understands and knows Me."

וְזֹאת הִיא הַמְדֻרְגָּה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה שֶׁבִּידִיעַת הָאֵל יִתְבָּרָה, כִּי מִי שֶׁיֵּדְעֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת יִדְבֹּק בְּעֲבוּדָתוֹ וּבִירְאָתוֹ כְּפִי יְדִיעָתוֹ בְּלִבּוֹ וּבְמַצְפוֹנוֹ.

And this is the highest level in the knowledge of Hashem, blessed be He, for whoever truly knows Him will cling to His avodah and to His fear, according to the knowledge in his heart and his inner being.

וַיִּתְקַיְּמוּ לוֹ חֻבוֹת הַלְּבָבוֹת וְהָאֲבָרִים בְּלִי טָרַח וּבְלִי עָמָל, אֶךְ בְּחָרִיצוֹת וְהַשְׁתַּדְּלוֹת וְזִרְיוֹת, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר דָּוִד (תהלים קיט): "חֲשֵׁתִי וְלֹא הִתְמַהֲמַהֲתִי וְגוֹ".

And for him, the duties of the heart and the limbs will be fulfilled without toil or effort, but rather with diligence, exertion, and alacrity, just as Dovid HaMelech said (Tehilim 119:60): "I hastened and did not delay, etc."

וְבוֹ אָמַר הֶחָכֵם (משלי ג): "אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם מְצָא חֵכְמָה", וְאָמַר (תהלים קו): "אֲשֶׁרִי שׁוֹמְרֵי מִשְׁפָּט וְגוֹ".

And regarding this, the wise man said (Mishlei 3:13): "Fortunate is the man who finds wisdom," and it says (Tehilim 106:3): "Fortunate are those who keep justice, etc."

וְהָאֱלֹהִים יִתְבָּרָךְ יְשִׁימֵנו מֵהֵם וַיַּכְנִיסֵנוּ בְּכַתְּוִתֵּיהֶם בְּרַחֲמָיו, אָמֵן.

And may Hashem, blessed be He, place us among them and include us in their ranks, in His mercy, amen.

WHAT TO TAKE FROM IT

This chapter explains that the effectiveness of one's spiritual accounting depends on the purity of their soul and the clarity of their intellect. When a person's intentions are solely for Hashem, He grants them divine assistance, illuminating their path with truth and wisdom. This leads to inner peace, freedom from worldly worries, and a deep simcha in serving Hashem. Such a person attains a profound understanding of both the physical and spiritual worlds, fulfilling the duties of the heart and limbs with eagerness and zeal, reaching the highest level of knowing Hashem.

The Chovos HaLevavos here is teaching us a tremendous chiddush: when a person does cheshbon hanefesh with a pure heart, truly for Hashem, it's not just about fixing what's broken. It's about opening up to a flow of kedusha, a light of truth from Hashem Himself. This isn't just self-improvement; it's a spiritual transformation. When we align our inner accounting with Hashem's will, He helps us, illuminates us, and purifies our entire being, inside and out.

This is the secret to true simcha in avodas Hashem. The Chovos HaLevavos says our thoughts will quiet from worldly worries, and we'll *rejoice* in serving the Creator. Why? Because this deep, pure cheshbon hanefesh leads to a profound knowledge of Hashem, His wisdom, and His hashgacha. It's not just intellectual knowledge; it's a heart-knowledge that brings us closer to Him, making His mitzvos a delight, not a burden. We become like Dovid HaMelech, who said, "I made haste, and delayed not, to observe Your commandments." The mitzvos become a natural expression of our inner connection.

So often, we approach cheshbon hanefesh as a chore, a necessary evil to identify our faults. But the Chovos HaLevavos is telling us it's much more. It's a pathway to the highest madreiga, to truly knowing Hashem and clinging to Him. When we do it with a pure intention, seeking only His will, it transforms our entire avodah from effort to eagerness, from struggle to joy.

Today, when you do any mitzvah or even a small act of cheshbon hanefesh, try to focus on doing it purely for Hashem, with the intention that it should bring you closer to Him and His truth.