

**CHESHBON HANEFESH – SELF-ACCOUNTING****QUESTION:**

1) Is cheshbon hanefesh (*making a self-accounting*) an avodah for every person or is it only for people on a higher level?

**ANSWER:**

It is for everyone, each person according to his level.

**QUESTION**

2) During Elul does every person need to make cheshbon hanefesh and to write a list or notebook of kaballos (*resolutions*) to take on, or was this only for the baalei mussar?

**ANSWER**

It is very good to write down any notes on oneself, not just for kaballos, but to organize one's progress in life and write down one's experiences so that he can keep track of himself.

**QUESTION**

3) How does a person make a proper cheshbon hanefesh?

**ANSWER**

There is already a response on this topic, try to get a hold of it. [From Q&A 4949 – How To Make Cheshbon HaNefesh: "Organize an order of avodah that you will follow every day. Make a daily self-accounting in which you will think about the daily order that you have set for yourself and see how you are progressing with it. This is besides for reviewing how the day was in general [in terms of your avodas Hashem]. However, do not take yourself apart so much. Instead, when you are making a self-accounting, keep your focus on the points which you have chosen to work on that day."

**QUESTION**

4) What about if a person isn't happy with himself and he has a very self-critical nature? Does he also need to make a

cheshbon hanefesh?

**ANSWER**

He should at least see if he has committed any aveiros. For a certain amount of time he should be busy focusing on his qualities (*see the sefer Hakarah Atzmis V'Haatzamas HaNefesh (Self-Recognition)* for more on this). At a later point when he has become more balanced after knowing his qualities, he should then start cheshbon hanefesh.

**QUESTION**

5) Sefer Tanya says that a person should only think about his misdeeds at night before going to sleep. According to this view does a person still need to make cheshbon hanefesh during the day?

**ANSWER**

It is not for every day of Elul, there should only be one day specially chosen for cheshbon hanefesh.

**QUESTION**

6) And if a person doesn't know himself that well does he also need to make cheshbon hanefesh?

**ANSWER**

See answer to 4 above.

**QUESTION**

7) I heard someone say that if a person is very drawn towards sadness or he's very self-critical, his teshuvah in Elul is not to think about his sins or his shortcomings, but to just be b'simchah and just thank Hashem for everything he has. Is that indeed the avodah for a person who is very negative? If that's true, then it would apply to a lot of people who are in this category....

**ANSWER**

See answer to 4 above.

## QUESTION

8) What is the root of all a person's problems? Can we say that all problems come from a lack of emunah, from a lack of kedushah, from not learning mussar, from not having enough connection to a tzaddik, from not being immersed enough in Torah, from not having emunah or from not being b'simchah, etc.? I hear so many different views on what the root of all of a person's issues is and it seems that each path in avodas Hashem points to a different root. I'm a bit confused by this because I think that they're all correct. What indeed is the root of all of a person's troubles and problems? Is there an order to it?

## ANSWER

The root of all issues is when a person doesn't have the light of Hashem revealed in his life. From there onward, every person has his own root where his problems may be stemming from.

## ASKING MECHILAH (FORGIVENESS)

### QUESTION:

I was thinking recently about all the different instances in my life I can remember in which I did not treat others right. Who knows how many people's feelings I hurt! I can remember some instances in which I intentionally slighted another person, but there were many instances where I may have unintentionally hurt their feelings or mistreated them... Tons of chavrusas that I didn't show enough respect to.... Acting like a baal gaavah (*boosting my ego at the expense of others*) and not being machshiv my friends enough, always thinking that I was smarter and better than them.... Walking around with a sour face and hurting everyone who saw me

by not smiling at them and greeting them the way I should have.... And the list goes on and on. I feel like making a list of each person I think I may have hurt and then calling them up to ask them for mechilah. Is that what I am supposed to do?

### ANSWER:

There's no end to this. None of us are perfect. And many times, the one who got insulted was the one who brought about the insult upon him. Therefore, as long one didn't openly insult someone and there wasn't recognizable 'damage' afterwards, you don't have to go looking for the one you may have insulted. Instead, when you bump into him, ask him for mechilah. Always daven that you shouldn't insult others, and daven that whoever you insulted should forgive you with their full heart.

## BASIC GUIDANCE FOR TESHUVAH

### QUESTION:

I'm so confused when I start wondering how I should do teshuvah, especially during Aseres Ymei Teshuvah. How do we begin to do teshuvah? What should we focus on? How can we do it all during Asres Ymei Teshuvah??

### ANSWER:

Everything has a root and branches to it, and there are many braches. But the root is always one. Clarify deeply what the one underlying root of all your problems are, and then fix the problem at its root. When you fix the root, you are a lot closer to fixing the branches of your failings. This is the fundamental way of tikkun during these days. Also, make sure to quickly stop doing anything that goes against halachah.



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