



A Marvelous Insight from the Sha'arei Orah the Shela HaKadosh and the Recanati

We Recite One Hundred Berachos Daily to Connect the Three Components of the Neshamah to HKB"H

This week's parsha is parshas Eikev. Thus, it is fitting for us to focus on the sacred obligation of every Jew to utter one hundred Berachos every day. This obligation is derived from the following passuk (Devarim 10, 12): **"ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלקיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאחבה."** **And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you, but to revere Hashem, your G-d, to follow in His ways, to love Him, and to serve Hashem, your G-d, with all of your heart and all of your soul.** Rabbi Meir expounds on this passuk in the Gemara (Menachos 43b):

"חייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום, שנאמר ועתה ישראל מה ה'

אלקיך שואל מעמך"

—a person is obligated to recite one hundred Berachos daily, as it states: **"And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you."** Rashi provides the following clarification: **In the phrase "מה ה' אלקיך", read the word as "מאה"** (one hundred), instead of **"מה"** (what). In other words, instead of reading: **"What does Hashem want,"** we are to read it as **"Hashem wants one hundred."** Citing Rashi, Tosafos explain that this means that we are obligated to recite one hundred Berachos.

Additionally, Tosafos provide us with a wonderful "remez." If we count the number of letters in this passuk as it is written in the Torah, there are exactly 99; however, if we add the letter **"aleph"** to the word **מאה**, we arrive at a total of 100 letters—**מאה**. This alludes to the 100 Berachos that we are obligated to recite daily. We find this same interpretation and allusion in the commentary of Rabeinu Bachaye:

"וידוע מה שדרשו רבותינו ז"ל מן הכתוב הזה, שחייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום, שנאמר מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך. ויש בפסוק זה תשעים ותשע אותיות, ועם אלף שתשים במילת 'מה' ישלימו למאה אותיות, ותחזור המלה 'מאה' כדי לרמוז בדרך אסמכתא, שחייב אדם לברך בכל יום מאה ברכות. וכן יש אסמכתא לזה מפסוק הנה כי כן יבורך גבר ירא ה', כי ירא ה' יש לו לברך מגין כי כן."

Toward the end of this comment, he brings further support for this practice from the passuk (Tehillim 128, 4): **"Behold, the man who fears Hashem blesses"** **"כי כן"**—i.e., blesses 100 Berachos—the gematria of **"כי כן"**.

Notwithstanding, it behooves us to explain why HKB"H chose to teach us the obligation to recite 100 Berachos daily by deleting one letter from the passuk **"ועתה ישראל"**. As explained, the passuk as it is written in the Torah contains 99 letters, and we have to add one letter orally. Additionally, why did HKB"H opt to

delete the letter “**aleph**” specifically, compelling us to add it, as per the elucidation: “אל תקרי מה אלא מאה”—**do not read “מה” but rather “מאה”**?

One Hundred Berachos to Remedy One Hundred Deaths per Day

Now, it is important to note that Chazal teach us that the practice of reciting one hundred Berachos daily was instituted by David HaMelech. This is taught in the Midrash Tanchuma (Korach 12) and also in the Midrash Rabbah (Bamidbar Rabbah 18, 21), where they expounded on the passuk (Shmuel II 23, 1):

“נאום דוד בן ישי ונאום הגבר הוקם על משיח אלקי יעקב ונאום זמירות ישראל, הוקם ע”ל בגימטריא מאה כנגד מאה ברכות, שבכל יום היו מתים מישראל מאה אנשים, בא דוד ותיקנן למאה ברכות, ועתה ישראל מה ה’ אלקיך, קרי ביה מאה אלו מאה ברכות, כיון שתיקנום נעצרה המגפה.”

Regarding David’s final words, it says: “**This is the speech of David ben Yishai, and the speech of the man who established the yoke**”—“הוקם על”. The gematria of the word ע”ל is 100, alluding to the 100 Berachos. In the times of David HaMelech, one hundred Israelites were dying each and every day—the reason for these deaths was unknown. After investigating the matter, David HaMelech divined the remedy and instituted the recitation of one hundred Berachos. The Tur (O.C. 46) explains that based on this elucidation of “הוקם על”, our sages followed suit by instituting that in addition to the Berachos recited routinely throughout the course of a Jew’s day, a Jew should recite additional Berachos to complete a total of one hundred Berachos.

In his sefer, Kad HaKemach, Rabeinu Bachaye reconciles an apparent contradiction. Rabbi Meir’s elucidation in the Gemara infers that Moshe Rabeinu had already instituted the obligation for Yisrael to

recite 100 Berachos per day based on the passuk: “ועתה ישראל מה ה’ אלקיך שואל מעמך”. The Midrash, on the other hand, infers that David HaMelech instituted the 100 Berachos. Rabeinu Bachaye explains the discrepancy as follows: **It appears from all of the above that Moshe Rabeinu, a”h, instituted them originally. Subsequently, they forgot them and David instituted them anew. After David’s time, they forgot them, and the sages of the Talmud instituted them once again.**

This is also discussed in the sefer HaManhig, authored by Rabbi Avraham ben Nasan HaYarchi (Laws of Tefilah): **We have a tradition passed down to us from our forefathers to recite one hundred Berachos every day—from the Torah, from the Neviim, and from the Ketuvim.** He provides the sources for all three. We will now endeavor to explain how David HaMelech’s remedy—instituting the practice of reciting 100 Berachos daily—halted the plague of one hundred deaths per day.

The Explanation of the Sha’arei Orah and the Recanati

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing an important, fundamental principle concerning the desired purpose and benefit of reciting 100 Berachos for “tikun hanefesh.” This profound insight is brought down in the Shela HaKadosh (Toldos) in the name of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla in Sha’arei Orah (1). They purport that the purpose of reciting one hundred Berachos daily is to connect the three parts of the soul—the **nefesh, ruach, and neshamah**. The **nefesh**, representing **Yisrael**, recites one hundred Berachos. It gives one-tenth of them to the **ruach**, representing the **levi**. Then, the **ruach** gives one berachah, one-tenth of what it received, to the **neshamah**, representing the

kohen. In this manner, the three parts of the Jewish soul—the **nefesh, ruach, and neshamah**—are joined together. If even a single berachah is lacking, the system is defective; the **neshamah** will not receive a single berachah, since the **ruach** did not receive the ten Berachos necessary to give its one-tenth. This is the mystery of the system of tithes outlined in the Torah for leviim and kohanim.

In the sefer Recanati (Korach), authored by the divine kabbalist Rabbi Menachem Recanati, ztz"l, he explains that the status of a kohen is superior to and more intimate than that of a levi. Hence, It is imperative that we connect the **nefesh** to the **ruach**, and the **ruach** to the **neshamah**, since the **neshamah** is attached to Hashem. So, if Yisrael does not contribute one hundred, the leviim do not receive ten; then the kohen does not receive one. Thus, the system falls apart and there is no mechanism to distribute berachah.

Hashem's Candle Is Man's Neshamah

They are teaching us the importance of connecting the nefesh, ruach, and neshamah. We can provide clarification based on a teaching in the Gemara (Sotah 3a): "אין אדם עובר עבירה אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות"—**a person does not commit an aveirah unless he is possessed by a whim of foolishness** (insanity). In the Panim Yafos (Bereishis), he explains based on teachings in the Zohar hakadosh and the writings of the Arizal that there is a hierarchy within man's soul and being. The kedushah of the **ruach** is superior to that of the **nefesh**; and the kedushah of the **neshamah** is superior to that of the **ruach**. These three components of the soul correspond to the human functions of **deed (action), speech, and thought**.

The **nefesh** is the sustaining life-force concealed in a person's blood. It enables the human limbs to function

and act. Thus, everything a person does relates to the nefesh, and as the passuk states (Devarim 12, 23): **כי הדם הוא הנפש**—**for the blood is the "nefesh"**—i.e., the nefesh resides in the blood.

HKB"H endowed man with the power of speech by means of the **ruach**. This is conveyed by the passuk (Bereishis 2, 7): **ויהי האדם לנפש חיה**—**and man became a living soul**. The Targum Onkelos explains that this means that man was endowed with a speaking spirit (ruach). Now, the ruach resides in the heart, and speech is the quill (writing instrument) of the heart.

The **neshamah** is the divine spark that endows man with the power of thought, as it is written (ibid.): **ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים**—**and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life**. The sefer HaKaneh teaches that the neshamah was not created from scratch. In fact, it is a divine spark from above that HKB"H breathed into man of Himself, so to speak.

In reality, everyone does not merit receiving all three components of the soul; it all depends on an individual's spiritual level and to what degree he serves Hashem. The Zohar hakadosh (Mishpatim 94b) explains this as follows: **תא חזי בר נש כד אתיליד יהבין ליה נפשא... זכה יתיר יהבין ליה רוחא... זכה יתיר יהבין ליה נשמתא**. **Come and see: when a person is born, he is given a "nefesh" . . . if he merits more, he is given a "ruach" . . . if he is even more meritorious, he is given a "neshamah."** In other words, when a person is endowed with this piece of G-d from above—the illumination of the neshamah—he receives divine assistance to accomplish his mission in life. This is the meaning of: **ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים**.

This then is what the following passuk is teaching us (Mishlei 20, 27): **נר ה' נשמת אדם חופש כל חדרי בטן**—**a**

man's soul (neshamah) is the lamp of Hashem, which searches throughout one's inner bodily chambers. This piece of G-d within every human being resembles a lamp that illuminates the darkness within a person's being; it seeks out the wickedness within him, so that he can extinguish it. This is expressed by the following (Iyov 32, 8): **"ונשמת שדי—and the soul (neshamah) given by G-d provides them with insight—the neshamah HKB"H** gives us, provides us with the intelligence and insight to serve Hashem.

The Neshamah Vanishes when a Sin Is Committed

When a person sullies himself by committing sins, the neshamah abandons him in advance, so that it will not be blemished by the sin. Consequently, he forfeits the divine assistance provided by the illumination of the neshamah. This is explained in the Zohar hakadosh (Noach 62a). If a person wishes to refine himself, he is provided with a holy neshamah to assist him. If, however, he is not meritorious and does not wish to refine himself, he is left with only two levels of the soul—the lower components, the nefesh and the ruach without the holy neshamah. In other words, if a person sullies himself by sinning, he forfeits the divine assistance from above. Without the component of the "neshamah," and the divine assistance it provides, a person cannot sanctify himself properly.

Based on this notion, the Panim Yafos explains the statement in the Gemara: **"A person does not commit an aveirah unless he is possessed by a whim of foolishness."** When a person commits a sin, the neshamah in the brain, which is a portion of G-d from above, abandons him. As a result, the chochmah in the brain abandons him and is replaced by a whim of

foolishness, which helps him commit the aveirah. This is what the Gemara means when it says (Yoma 38b): **"בא לטמא בותחין לו"—if one comes to defile himself, an opening is provided for him.**

The Panim Yafos adds an incredible remez from the passuk (Mishlei 16, 28): **"איש תהפוכות ישלח מדון—א דuplicitous man incites strife, and a complainer estranges a ruler."** The term **נרג"ן** is interpreted as an acronym for **נפש ר"וח גוף נשמה**. While committing a sin, the "guf" (body) becomes a physical barrier between the nefesh and ruach within him and the neshamah that has abandoned him and stays outside of him. Thus, the passuk is saying: **"ונרגן"—when the body becomes a barrier separating the nefesh and ruach from the neshamah, then: מפריד—מפריד—אלוף—as a consequence, he becomes separated from the Aluf of the world, namely HKB"H, Who is present within the neshamah, the portion of G-d from above.**

He explains that ideally, the neshamah should be superior to everything else, and it is connected with its heavenly source, since it is a portion of G-d from above. The ruach below it, is connected to the neshamah; the nefesh is connected to the ruach; the body is connected to the nefesh. In this manner, they are all connected to the illumination of the Living King and are able to endure. When a person, however, succumbs to his physical desires, he becomes a **"duplicitous man,"** because the body rises above the level of the nefesh and the ruach. The neshamah finds this intolerable, leaves, and ascends to the heavens; thus, the body creates strife between the lower levels of the soul—the ruach and neshamah—and the neshamah. As a result, one is detached from the chochmah that guides and teaches him. This sequence is symbolized by the term **נרג"ן**, indicating that the "guf" has transposed the ideal order and interjected itself above the ruach.

The Presence of the Neshamah Provides Immunity from the Harmful Forces

This implies that as long as the neshamah—the portion of G-d from above—is present in a person, the harmful forces have no effect on him. This is consistent with the following teaching (Shabbas 151b): **“אין חיה שולטת באדם עד שנדמה לו כבהמה, שנאמר אדם ביקר כל ילין נמשל”**—**a wild beast does not overpower a person until he appears to it as an animal, as it states (Tehillim 49, 21): “Man is glorious but understands it not (his glorious potential), he (the sinner; the man who neglects his mission) is likened to animals.”** The Maharsha comments in Chiddushei Aggados: **Wild beasts’ fear of mankind is on account of the “neshamah” they possess, which endows them with the image of G-d; however, once the image of G-d leaves a human being, he resembles a mere animal, over which the wild beast prevails.**

This can be explained in greater depth based on what is presented in the sefer Irin Kadishin (Korach) in the name of the esteemed Rabbi of Rozhin, zy”a. The divine root of the neshamah is the name Havaya in its full form spelled with alephs like this: **י”ד ה”א ו”א”**. The gematria of this spelling is 45, the numerical value of the word **אדם**. This implies that as long as the neshamah is present within a person, he is described as an **אדם**. If he sins, however, and the neshamah abandons him, he is no longer described as an **אדם** but merely as **“בשר אדם”**—“human flesh” associated with physical and material properties.

In this manner, he explains beautifully the Gemara’s statement (Chagigah 4a): **“אי זהו שוטה, זה המאבד כל מ”ה”**—**“who is considered a deranged person? One who destroys everything that we give him.”** He interprets this as referring to someone, who on account of his sins, loses his neshamah that is rooted in the name **מ”ה**. As a result, he becomes deranged,

because he has lost the chochmah associated with the neshamah in the brain. This concurs magnificently with the explanation of the Panim Yafos we presented above regarding the statement: **“A person does not commit an aveirah unless he is possessed by a whim of foolishness.”**

This also explains very nicely the statement: **A wild beast does not overpower a person until he appears to it as an animal, as it states: “Man is glorious but understands it not, he is likened to animals.”** The Maharsha explained this as follows: The root of the neshamah is from the name **מ”ה**, which is the gematria of **אדם**. So, when the neshamah leaves him, he is no longer considered an **“adam”** but merely an animal.

“מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך”

Hashem Only Requests that You Safeguard the Neshamah Emanating from מ”ה

This illuminates for us the insight of the Sha’arei Orah and the Recanati. They taught us that the obligation to recite one hundred Berachos daily is so that ten will be allotted to the “ruach” as a form of “ma’aser,” and one will be allotted to the “neshamah” as a form of “ma’aser min hama’aser.” This binds the three parts of the soul together securely, safeguarding a person from sinning. Then, the neshamah will not feel compelled to abandon him.

This also sheds light on the teaching of the Midrash: **Ten Israelite men were dying each day; to remedy this, David instituted the practice of reciting one hundred Berachos.** After investigating the cause for this plague, David realized that it was caused by their neshamahs abandoning them. As a consequence, they became vulnerable to the harmful forces that are analogous to wild beasts, in keeping with the statement: **“A wild beast does not overpower a person until he appears to it as an animal.”** As the

Shela hakadosh explains, this passuk refers to the wild beast that preys on mankind, namely the klipah. To prevent this calamitous sequence of events, David HaMelech instituted the one hundred Berachos. A full complement of Berachos ensures that the one berachah remains for the neshamah; thereby it is connected with the nefesh and ruach and does not leave. This remedy halted the plague.

In this manner, we can comprehend the conclusion of the Midrash. The sages derived the requirement to recite one hundred Berachos each day from the passuk: "ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך". We can interpret the passuk as follows: **Now, Yisrael, Hashem requests of you to safeguard the neshamah rooted in the name מ"ה**. Do not be characterized as a deranged person who **"damages the מ"ה that has been given to him."** Without the assistance of the neshamah in the brain, it will be very difficult for you to combat the yetzer hara residing in the left cavity of your heart.

Let us now return to the elucidation of Chazal: "אל תקרי מה אלא מאה"—they encourage us to read the word מ"ה in this passuk as "מאה". In other words, it is impossible to protect the neshamah in the brain that is rooted in the name מ"ה unless one recites "מאה"—**one hundred**—Berachos every day. This ensures that one berachah reaches the neshamah and establishes a connection between all three components of the soul—the nefesh, ruach, and neshamah.

This also sheds light for us on the sages' enigmatic teaching that written as is, the passuk of "ועתה ישראל" contains precisely 99 letters. By adding the missing letter **"aleph"** to form the word "מאה", we get a total of 100 letters corresponding to the 100 Berachos. We asked why did HKB"H arrange for the missing letter to be added by us? And why did He choose the letter **"aleph"** specifically?

Let us suggest an explanation based on what we have discussed. The 99 letters present in the passuk correspond to the 99 Berachos allotted to the "nefesh" and "ruach"—90 to the former and 9 to the latter. The letter **"aleph"** represents the one berachah allotted to the "neshamah." Since the "neshamah" occasionally vanishes due to a sin, the **"aleph"** goes missing. It is then up to us to restore the letter **"aleph,"** which is associated with the "neshamah." This is why the **"aleph"** is not written in the Torah but is inserted by us. For, it is our obligation to complete the full complement of one hundred Berachos and ensure that one berachah is available for the "neshamah."

In summary, reciting one hundred Berachos daily is a fantastic remedy for preventing the one hundred deaths that were occurring each day. This should motivate us to recite one hundred Berachos daily having in mind to connect the nefesh, ruach, and neshamah with HKB"H. In this merit, HKB"H will provide us with abundant berachah and success and long, wonderful, fruitful lives.

Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of אחינו בני ישראל

Family Madeb - לעילוי נשמת
their dear mother
Lea bat Virgini ע"ה

Arthur & Randi Luxenberg לזכות
of their wonderfull parents, children and grandchildren
לעילוי נשמת His Father ר' יצחק יהודה בן ר' אברהם ע"ה

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com