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Chesbon Hanefesh Aid

by Rabbi Avraham Katz

One of the goals of Davening is that it should affect us in our daily lives, in our thought, speech, and action. During Shachris we think about Hashem and our connection to Him.

In Krias Shema Al Hamita (or after Mariv, or some other time of the day) we should think about how does this connection to Hashem express itself in our physical lives, in terms of our observance of Torah and Mitzvos, and in terms of our relationships with others.

Each person has their own individual situation and needs to have their own Chesbon Nefesh of how they can serve Hashem and connect to Him fully in their own situation.

We will provide many general types of questions a Yid could ask themselves, and each person will choose out the correct questions to ask and the rewrite them in his own words. Then, every month (or better – every week) he can ask himself those questions that apply to his situation, and based on the answers to the questions he asks himself he will figure out what is the next step of what he can do to strengthen his connection to Hashem in all aspects of his life.

In addition, we put a daily chart where you can make a short note of a specific victory that you accomplished in the areas of learning, davening, or hanhaga-daily conduct and interaction with others.

Because everyone has a different situation, the questions will vary from person to person, so we give the option of making your own questions to ask yourself.

Learning Torah

Chassidus:

- 1) What did I learn this past month in Chassidus in the morning before davening?
- 2) At night?
- 3) *What are my goals this month in learning Chassidus?*

Halacha:

- 1) What did I learn this past month in Kitzur Shulchan Aruch?
- 2) In Alter Rebbe Shulchan Aruch?
- 3) In regular Tur/Shulchan Aruch with meforshim, or other Halacha sefarim?
- 4) *What are my goals this month in learning halacha?*

Chitas/Rambam

- 1) What tract of Rambam was I learning, Sefer Hamitzvos, Perek Echad or Gimmel Perakim?
- 2) How careful was I in learning Chitas and Rambam consistently?
- 3) To what extent did I actually learn Chitas and rambam?
- 4) *What is my goal this month in learning Chitas and Rambam?*

TaNach/ Mishnayos:

- 1) Did I learn any TaNach or Mishnayos this month, if yes, what?
- 2) *What are my goals this month in learning Tanach and Mishnayos?*

Gemara:

- 1) What did I learn this past month in Gemara in a way of Girsas (such as for Yud Tes Kislev)?
- 2) In a way of Iyun, like with a chavrusa or with meforshim etc.?
- 3) *What are my goals this month in learning Gemara?*

Other:

- 1) What other things did I learn this month besides for the above categories, did I learn Midrash, Inyonei Geula Umoshiach, or other sefarim, if yes, what?
- 2) *What other goals do I have in learning Torah besides those mentioned above?*

Davening

Pirush Hamilos:

- 1) What Pirush Hamilos of davening did I learn this month?
- 2) What parts of davening did I work on thinking the Pirush Hamilos every day during davening?
- 3) What parts of davening did I have a rotation of thinking the Pirush Hamilos every week or month or other time frame?
- 4) *What are my goals in Davening this month?*

Thinking Chassidus:

- 1) What concepts did I work to think about before or during davening this month?
- 2) *What are my goals in terms of thinking Chassidus this month, what do I what to think about and how often (every day, twice a week, on Shabbos) and for at least how many minutes each time?*

Krias Shema Al Hamita:

- 1) *What can I do better this month in saying Krias Shema Al Hamita and making a Chesbon Hanefesh (similar to what I'm doing now) on a more frequent basis, like one or more times a week?*
- 2) ***Did I keep my goals from last month? If not, why? What were the things that made it difficult to keep or stay focused on my goals? What can I do this month to overcome those difficulties, so that I will be able to focus on attaining my goals?***

Mitzvos done properly

Action Mitzvos (Asei):

How can I add in proper fulfillment of the following Mitzvos this month either in hidur mitzvah or in kavana and excitement of the mitzvah:

- 1) *Making Brachos before eating*
- 2) *Birkas Hamazon*
- 3) *Tefillin*
- 4) *Tzitzis*
- 5) *Tzedaka*
- 6) *Honoring my parents*
- 7) *Other Mitzvos to do better:*

Refraining Mitzvos (Lo Saaseh):

How can I be more careful this month in not doing the following aveiros:

- 1) *Keeping Shabbos properly*

- 2) *Being Tznius in all aspects of how I*
 - 1) *dress and undress*
 - 2) *how I talk*
 - 3) *what I look at*
 - 4) *what I listen to*
 - 5) *what I think about*
- 3) *Other Mitzvos things I should be more careful with:*

Birur Hamidos

Looking back at the past month, what of the following midos, which is something that I need to focus on the most to work on fixing up according to Chassidus:

- 1) Over indulgence in physical pleasures
- 2) Anger/pride/jealousy
- 3) Wasting time on idle chatter (devarim betailim), social media, or other time-wasting activities
- 4) Depression/anxiety/laziness/sense of helplessness and giving up all the time

Of those four things that I decide to work on this month, what is my plan of how to work on it, what concepts of Chassidus will I use to transform myself in that area?

Ahavas Yisrael

In the past month, what were my biggest challenges in Ahavas Yisrael:

- 1) Thinking good about other people
- 2) Speaking good about other people
- 3) Going out of my way to help other people
- 4) Something else

Based on that, what should I do this month to improve my Ahavas Yisrael, what teachings of Chassidus can I think about to help me work on the area of Ahavas Yisrael most difficult for me?

Hiskashrus

In Hiskashrus there are several aspects. Learning the Rebbe's maamarim and sichos, fulfilling his instructions, and writing to him.

- 1) Which maamarim and sichos (igros/farbrengens etc.) did I learn this past month, and what seder of learning the Rebbe's Torah do I plan on in order to connect to him?

- 2) Am I fulfilling the Rebbe's instruction of Chitas Rambam, having a Mashpia, or other instructions, and what do I plan to do this month to strengthen myself in fulfilling the Rebbe's instructions more carefully?
- 3) *When is the next time I plan on writing to the Rebbe, and what will I write about?*

Be'chol Drachecha Da'eihu

Something fundamental to our service of Hashem is that we take care of our material needs for the purpose of serving Hashem. There are two things to think about in this regard, 1) what is the purpose of the physical things we are involved with, 2) how do these things help us serve Hashem. We need to ask ourselves honestly if the physical things we use are really needed and helpful in our service of Hashem, or are distracting us from serving Hashem

In addition, Hashem wants us to take care of our health so we will be able to serve Him properly. In order to be healthy, we need to think about the different things we can do to be healthy, whether in eating healthy, exercise, or other aspects of proper health.

We should ask ourselves:

- 1) *What did I do last month and what can I do this month to remind myself to think about what I eat and wear that it should be for the purpose of serving Hashem?*
- 2) *What did I do last month and what can I do this month to work on being healthy and strong to be able to serve Hashem properly?*
- 3) *What are my goals this month in being healthy to serve Hashem?*

Chinuch

- 1) How much time do I spend learning Torah or other Jewish activities with my children?
- 2) What am I doing to show a good example for my children that I would want them to emulate?
- 3) What things do I see in my children that bother me that I need to start by working on myself in those areas instead of being angry at them?
- 4) What values do I want to teach them that I need to be creative in thinking about how to give over the idea to them in a way that they will appreciate at their level?
- 5) *What are my goals this month in the Chinuch of my children for?*

Shlichus/Mivtzoim/Community

- 1) How can I contribute to the community that I live in materially and spiritually? By setting up funds for those that need? By starting a shiur or strengthening an existing shiur in the community? By volunteering to help with the Shul/Chabad House/Cheder etc.?
- 2) How can I positively influence more Jews to connect to Yiddishkeit and Chassidus? By going on mivtzoim once a week? By learning with people over the phone (like JNet or otherwise)? By making a shiur in my workplace?

3) *What are my goals this month in Shlichus/Mivtzoim/Community?*

Personal questions

Write out your own questions that you want to ask yourself based on your own personal situation:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

B”H Daily Chesbon Nefesh for month of _____, 578_

Torah							
Davening							
Hanhaga							

Torah							
Davening							
Hanhaga							
Torah							
Davening							
Hanhaga							
Torah							
Davening							
Daily victory	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Shabbos
Hanhaga							
Torah							
Davening							
Hanhaga							

Based on the Monthly Chesbon Nefesh, I have set for myself various long term and short-term goals, and based on those goals I have daily quotas of what I want to learn and what I want to work on in davening and Ahavas Yisrael. This daily chesbon is just to write brief notes of my daily progress so that I will be able to analyze what I am doing properly at the monthly chesbon tzedek. Start any day of the week (e.g., Rosh Chodesh or a couple days before) and write the date. This covers 3 general topics, Torah, Davening, and Hanhaga, which can mean Ahavas Yisroel or Birur Hamidos or Hidur Mitzvah etc. It is spread out over 5 weeks, to cover the entire month regardless of what day the month starts.