



## REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

# Awareness and Accounting

The end of *parashat Chukat* describes the various victories of the Jewish people as they conquered land approaching the border of Eretz Yisrael. Most notable was the war against Sichon, king of the Amorites, whose capital city was Cheshbon. Interestingly, the Torah shares some background about the territory and recounts, “*Al kein yom’ru hamoshlim, “Bo’u Cheshbon, tibaneh ve’tikonem ir Sichon* — Concerning this, those who speak in parables [referring to Bilaam] say, “Come to Cheshbon, may it be built and established as the city of Sichon.” (*Bamidbar 21:27*) The Gemara interprets these verses homiletically. “**Hamoshlim**”; these are the people who **rule** over their evil inclination. They will say: “Come to **Cheshbon**,” meaning: Come and let us **calculate** the account of the world, i.e., the financial loss incurred by the fulfillment of a mitzvah in contrast to its reward, and the reward for committing a transgression, i.e., the pleasure and gain



Rabbi Shimshon  
Dovid Pincus zt”l

received, in contrast to the loss it entails. (Bava Batra 78b)

Why did our Sages derive this explanation, when it has no correlation to the plain meaning of the text?

Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* answers this question with an important approach. Although the interpretation deviates from the context of the verse, our Sages lived with focused awareness that every moment of their lives matter and understood that Hashem keeps a continuous accounting of our choices and deeds. Therefore, when they saw these words, it automatically brought to mind the concept of reckoning one’s actions, teaching us this important lesson.

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky zt”l, notes that this is the intention of the verse, “*Ashrei adam shome’a li* — Fortunate is the man who listens to me.” (*Mishlei 8:34*) All “listening,” everything one hears, should immediately be associated with something spiritual, something that can help him grow. This is how we live a life of consciousness mirroring a spiritual reality.

Conducting an accounting of one’s deeds and actions indicates an awareness of the need to fill one’s days with purpose and meaning. The Chafetz Chaim zt”l was known

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to reinforce this idea, telling people that after 120 years we will all have to give an accounting of our years, days, minutes and even the seconds of our lives. Each action we do creates a reality and makes an impression. We must be mindful of how the present moment can impact eternity.

Rav Pincus zt"l in *Tiferet Shimshon* extols the tremendous value of constant introspection in that it shows that one cares about his *avodat Hashem*. In any relationship, apathy and lack of concern implies distance and coldness. In contrast, when we think about improving our tefillah or our mitzvot *bein adam l'chavero*, we demonstrate that our mitzvah observance and relationship with Hashem is important.

Continued contemplation is the key for *siyata dishamaya*, Divine assistance to grow and develop in our *avodat Hashem*. ■




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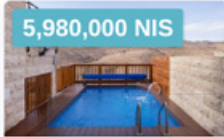

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