

EMET

אמת

TRUTH

Kallah 2022

The Mussar Institute

חשבון הנפש

Heshbon ha'nefesh

Accounting of the Soul

A Practicum



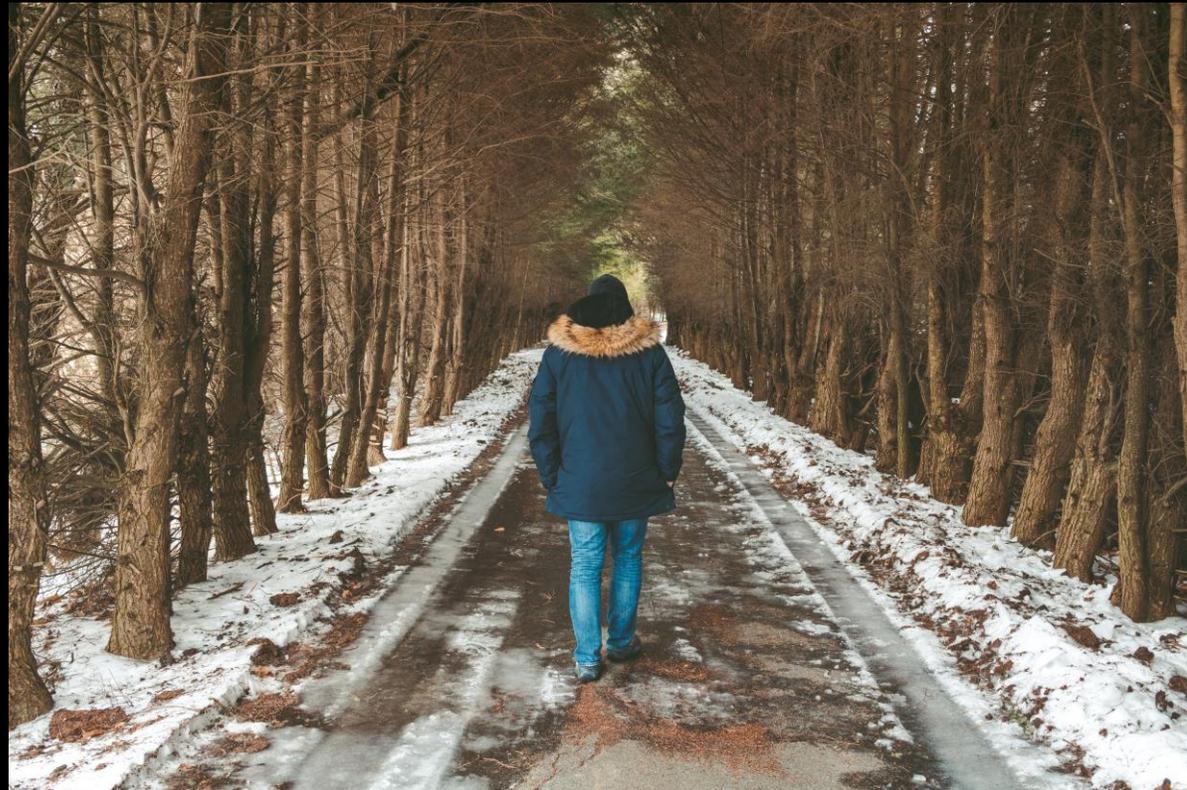
The term “accounting of the soul” is a direct translation of the Hebrew phrase “*heshbon ha--nefesh*,” which can be used to describe any kind of inner stock--taking. Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchik pointed out that after each day of creation, God looked back at the day and evaluated it: “And [God] saw that it was good.”

Since one of the guiding principles of Mussar practice is to “walk in [God’s] way,” in other words, to learn from and try to emulate the Divine, so we too should be looking back at our actions and evaluating them. That means doing an Accounting of the Soul – *Heshbon HaNefesh*.

Alan Morinis – *A Season of Mussar*



One way in which I can do a better job of walking the path of *emet*/truth is ...





PRACTICAL TIPS AND PROMPTS FOR DOING *CHESHBON HA'NEFESH*

Keep this list in the front of your journal to turn to when you need a kick start.

- In whom did I see the *middah*—myself or another person?
- How did my experience of the *middah* compare to my learning about that *middah*?
- Did that *middah* appear toward the excess or deficient ends of the range?
- What factors precipitated the showing up of that *middah*?
- Is there a pattern in which that *middah* gets put to the test in my life?
- What is the lesson for me in this experience?
- If you are having difficulty doing the practice (e.g., forgetting, feeling too tired) ask yourself whether that may be your *yetzer ha'ra* at play.
- Do you have something to write about a *kabbalah* you have taken on?
- When you journal, say a little prayer of gratitude for having the resources to contribute to your spiritual life in this way.



THE LETTERS OF THE WORD
SHEKER - A LIE
SHAKE UPON THEIR POINTS AND WILL EASILY FALL
BUT THE LETTERS OF THE WORD
EMET - TRUTH
REST FIRMLY ON THEIR BASES
AND WILL NEVER BE SHAKEN

***Remember who
you wanted to be***

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Like an accountant reviewing a company's books, the "accounting of the soul" practice gives you all the tools you need to "audit" your inner life. The conscious mind now gains access to features of the unconscious and becomes aware of the soul--traits that mold our everyday existence, including thoughts, feelings and actions. That's how *heshbon ha'nefesh* works. It brings to light deep patterns that might otherwise remain hidden from us.

Alan Morinis – *A Season of Mussar*



When have you given a good answer to a question that you felt was less than truthful? How did you feel? If you had a do-over, would you have done anything differently?