

## Reciting the Berochoh of "Modim" with Proper Intent Is Considered as if One Recited One Hundred Blessings and Is Spared from all Evil

We read this week in parshas Eikev (Devorim 10, 12): "ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלקיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאהבה אותו ולעבוד את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך" — and now, Yisroel, 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. Our sages of blessed memory derive from this possuk that we are obligated to recite one hundred beroches every day. This is stated in the following Gemoreh (Menoches 43:), in the name of Rabbi Meir: "חייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום, שנאמר ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך"

Rashi comments: "מה ה' אלקיך, קרי ביה מאה" — read the word in our possuk as מאה, meaning one hundred, rather than as מה, meaning what. Tosafos clarify the meaning of Rashi's comment: "ובקונטרס פירש אל תקרי: כלומר שחייב ק' ברכות" — in other words, we derive from this possuk the obligation to recite one hundred beroches.

Similarly, our blessed sages revealed that David HaMelech instituted the recitation of one hundred beroches each day in order to save the lives of one hundred members of Yisroel who were dying every day. This is taught both in the Midrash Tanchuma (Korach 12) and the Midrash Rabbah (ibid. 18,21) concerning the possuk in Shmuel (II 23, 1):

"נאום דוד בן ישי ונאום הגבר הוקם על - 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, — in David's last words, the word ע"ל appears, which has a numerical value of one hundred; this alludes to the one hundred blessings a day instituted by David HaMelech, which halted the plague of one hundred deaths per day.

An expanded explanation regarding this institution is found in the Tur (O.C. 46):

"דוד המלך עליו השלום תיקן מאה ברכות, דכתיב הוקם על - ע"ל בגימטריא מאה הוו, כי בכל יום היו מתים מאה נפשות מישראל ולא היו יודעין על מה, עד שחקר והבין ברוח הקודש ותיקן להם לישראל מאה ברכות, ועל כן תיקנו חכמים ז"ל אלו הברכות על סדר העולם והנהגתו, להשלים מאה ברכות בכל יום."

In the times of David HaMelech, one hundred members of Yisroel 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 beroches. Our sages followed suit and instituted the completion of one hundred blessings per day based on the course of daily events.

Concerning this practice, we find the following inspiring words from the great Rabbi Moshe Yehudah Leib of Sasov, zy"l: "מעולם, מאתו לא יראתי מפני אדוני האדונים, ואם לא חטאתי רק זאת, שאני אומר מאה ברכות בכל יום בלא יראה ופחד, אשר בעוונותי הרבים אני מכעיס להשי"ת ברוך הוא וברוך שמו מאה פעמים בכל יום, אוי לי ואוי לנפשי מה שאני — פוגם בכל יום" — he laments the fact that he did not recite the one hundred beroches each day with proper reverence and the harm he caused.

### The Numerical Value of מודים Is One Hundred Corresponding to One Hundred Beroches

Now, if this holy personage humbly describes his own shortcomings concerning the recitation of the one hundred daily beroches in such terms, one can only imagine our own shortcomings concerning this matter — for we are but orphans of orphans in this lowly generation preceding the arrival of the Mashiach. Furthermore, if David HaMelech instituted one hundred beroches in order to save the lives of one hundred people that were dying each day, consider the tragedies and suffering we currently witness each and every day. Perhaps, these events are a consequence of our failure to recite our one hundred daily beroches with proper focus and intent!

Nevertheless, we find consolation in the novel insight provided by the Daas Zekeinim from the Tosafists. They write that our blessed sages instituted the berochoh of "Modim" to correspond to the one hundred beroches. Additionally, whoever recites "Modim" with proper intent and focus is credited as if he recited all one hundred beroches with proper intent. It is fitting, therefore, that we discuss at greater length the great importance of the blessing of "Modim," and the reason we bow while reciting this berochoh.

We learn in the Gemoreh (Bava Kamma 16.): "שדרו" של אדם לאחר שבע שנים נעשה נחש, והני מיילי דלא "the spine of the deceased becomes a serpent after seven years, but that is only if he failed to bow down during "Modim." Both Tosafos and the Zohar hakadosh (Shelach 164.) explain that this implies that the deceased will not participate in the resurrection of the dead. In the words of the Zohar: "אי לא כפיף במודים אתעביד חויא, ולית ליה תקומה לההוא זמנא." It is incumbent upon us to explain why the punishment is so severe for one's failure to bow down during "Modim" — that his spine turns into a serpent and he is excluded from the resurrection of the dead.

### "And for Your Miracles which We Experience Every Day"

Let us begin with the magnificent words of the Toras Chaim (Bava Kamma 16.), which each and every one of us should review, morning and night. He states that the reason the Members of the Great Assembly instituted the recitation of "Modim" in the Shemoneh Esreh thrice daily is to fulfill the words of the possuk (Tehillim 150, 6): "כל הנשמה תהלל יה" — let all souls praise G-d. Our sages elucidate this possuk as follows (B.R. 14, 9): "על כל נשימה ונשימה שאדם נושם צריך לקלס לבורא" — one must praise the Creator for each and every breath one takes. Here are the words of the Toras Chaim:

"לפי שהוא יתברך עושה חסד עם כל אדם בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל רגע, אלא שאין בעל הנס מכיר בניסיו, סבור עולם כמנהגו הוא נוהג, ואינו מרגיש שכל פסיעה ופסיעה, וכל תנועה ותנועה, וכל נשימה ונשימה, הוא ממנו יתברך שמו, כמו שנאמר (תהלים לז כג) מה מצעדי גבר כוננו, וכתוב (איוב יב י) אשר בידו נפש כל חי ורוח כל בשר איש.

והיה מן הראוי, שיודה האדם ויברך בכל עת ובכל רגע, על כל פסיעה ותנועה ונשימה, כמו שאמרו חכמים כל הנשמה תהלל יה, על כל נשימה ונשימה חייב אדם להלל

יה, וכל מי שאינו מעלה על לבו בכל רגע שהכל מאתו יתברך, אלא עולם כמנהגו נוהג, הרי הוא ככופר בו חס ושלום.

ולפי שהוא מן הנמנע שיעמוד אדם מן הבוקר ועד הערב, ויתן שבח והודאה על כל פסיעה ונשימה ותנועה, וכל שכן רוב בני העולם הולכים תמיד אחרי הבלי העולם הזה באסיפת ממון וכיוצא בזה, ואפילו הנהנה מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה והודאה, אמרו חכמים (ברכות לה:): דהוי כאלו מעל וגוזל לכנסת ישראל שנאמר לה' הארץ וגו'.

ולזאת המציאו אנשי כנסת הגדולה תקנה, ויסדו לומר בכל תפלה ערב ובקר וצהרים ברכת הודאה, כדי שיכלול אדם בהודאה אחת את כל הנשימות וחסדים ונפלאות שהוא יתברך עושה עמו בכל רגע, ויוצא ידי חובת כולן בבת אחת בהודאה אחת, ולזה יסדו לומר מודים אנחנו לך וכו', על חיינו המסורים בדרך ועל נשמותינו הפקודות לך, דהיינו על כל נשימה ונשימה, ועל נסיון שבכל יום ויום עמנו, ועל נפלאותיך וטובותיך שבכל עת ערב ובקר וצהרים."

Every person experiences Hashem's kindness every moment of every day; yet, most of this kindness goes unrecognized; people take it for granted and assume that the world functions based on the laws of nature. They fail to recognize that every step and every breath comes from the Almighty.

It is fitting, therefore, that a person should thank Hashem constantly; one who fails to do so and attributes every action to the laws of nature is a blasphemer and a disbeliever, chas v'shalom.

Yet, since it is not feasible for a person to praise Hashem for every single step and breath, throughout the day, the Members of the Great Assembly instituted a blessing of thanks to be recited three times a day. This single berochoh incorporates one's gratitude for all of the wonderful favors the Almighty bestows upon us throughout the day and allows us to fulfill our obligation to thank Him in one fell swoop.

### The Serpent Lost His Upright Stature due to His Failure to Bow Down to Hashem

In this manner, the Toras Chaim goes on to explain the Gemoreh's statement that the spine of one who does not bow down during "Modim" turns into a serpent:

"ולכך תיקנו לשחות בברכה זו, כמנהג בשר ודם המורה לחבירו [על איזה] דבר, הוא שוחה ומנענע לו בראשו... ולהכי בכל מקום הודאה מצינו השתחוואה, כמו שנאמר (תהלים קלח ב) אשתחוה אל היכל קדשך ואודה את שמך על חסדך... ואמרו חז"ל (תמיד ז:): במקדש על כל הודיה השתחויה.

שכל העומד בקומה זקופה, ככופר בדבר הוא ואין הוראתו הוראה, כדאשכחן בדתן ואבירם שכפרו בתורת משה כתיב בהו (במדבר טז כז) יצאו נצבים בקומה זקופה, ואמרו במדרש רבה על הנחש כשבא לפתות את חוה בא בקומה זקופה, לפי שבא לכפור בו יתברך, ולכך נענש במדה ללכת שחוח שנאמר (בראשית ג יד) על גחונך תלך, [ופירש רש"י] דרגלים היו לו ונקצו.

ואפשר לומר דמהאי טעמא מי שאינו כורע במודים שדרו נעשה נחש, דכיון שעומד בקומה זקופה ואינו כורע ומתכוין להודות לו יתברך על כל חסדיו, הרי הוא ככופר בו יתברך ואומר לא הוא, והרי הוא כמורה לדעת הנחש הקדמוני, אשר כל הכפירות והדעות החיצוניות נמשכים ממנו.

כמו שאמרו חכמינו ז"ל (סוכה נב:): יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ומבקש להמיתו, דהיינו מיתה נצחית, לכך שדרתו נעשה נחש, שאין לו רפואה אפילו לעתיד כדאיתא במדרש (ב"ר כ ה) הכל מתרפאין חוץ מנחש, ונמצא שעל ידי כן אין לו חלק לעולם הבא, דכיון דשדרתו נעשה נחש, הרי לזו של שדרתו בטל, אשר ממנו יצמח האדם לעתיד.

Hence, it was instituted to bow during this blessing in keeping with the custom to bow or lower one's head when displaying gratitude to one's fellow man. Chazal state (Tomid 7:) that in the Beis HaMikdash every statement of gratitude was associated with a bow.

One who maintains an upright posture and does not bow while stating his gratitude is essentially denying his gratitude. We see this in Scriptures concerning Datan and Aviram (Bamidbar 16, 27); they are depicted as standing upright. Similarly, the Midrash depicts the primeval serpent as approaching Chava with an upright posture. In fact, this is why the serpent's punishment was (Bereishis 3, 14): על גחונך תלך — it crawls on its belly; as Rashi teaches us, it had legs which were removed.

We can suggest that this is why the spine of someone who fails to bow down during "Modim" turns into a serpent; he is espousing the behavior and philosophy of the primeval serpent; he is failing to thank Hashem properly and is, in fact, denying his gratitude.

The Midrash (B.R. 20, 5) states that there is a cure for all except the serpent. This is why one who fails to bow down during "Modim" is excluded from the resurrection and does not have a portion in the World to Come. When his spine turns into a serpent, his "luz" bone loses its ability to regenerate; thus, the possibility of resurrection in the future is eliminated.

According to the Toras Chaim, this is the reason why HKB"H reduced Adam HaRishon's stature after the sin. The Gemoreh teaches (Chagigah 12.): "אדם הראשון מן הארץ עד לרקיע... וכיון שסרח הניח הקב"ה ידיו עליו — originally, Adam HaRishon reached from the earth up to the heavens; once he sinned, however, HKB"H placed His hands upon him and reduced his stature. The Gemoreh elsewhere states (Sanhedrin 38:): "אדם הראשון מין היה" — Adam HaRishon was a heretic. As Rashi explains (Bereishis 3, 5) in the name of the Midrash, the serpent lied and blasphemed against HKB"H: "כל אומן שונא את בני אומנותו, מן העץ אכל וברא את העולם" — he claimed that HKB"H ate from the Tree of Knowledge and then created the universe.

Seeing as Adam HaRishon submitted to the serpent's persuasive claim and ate from the Tree of Knowledge, he is considered a heretic. Just as the serpent's punishment included the loss of his legs and his physical stature — for not bowing down and submitting to HKB"H — so, too, Adam HaRishon deserved to be stripped entirely of his prominence, both physical and spiritual; however, since he repented and confessed to his heresy, he was not punished as severely — HKB"H merely reduced his height and stature.

### "I Fashioned This People to Sing My Praise"

Following this path, let us rise to the occasion and suggest a novel idea that is applicable to all. How does the punishment for one who fails to bow down during "Modim" — his spine turns into a serpent and he is not resurrected with the dead — demonstrate the concept of measure for measure? First, let us address a statement made by our blessed sages in the Gemoreh (Chagigah 12., Sanhedrin 38:):

"אדם הראשון מן הארץ עד לרקיע היה, שנאמר (דברים ד לב) למן היום אשר ברא אלקים אדם על הארץ ולמקצה השמים ועד קצה השמים, כיון שסרח הניח הקב"ה ידיו עליו ומיעטו, שנאמר אחור וקדם צרתני ותשת עלי כפכה."

Regarding the fact that Adam HaRishon was initially created with immense stature which was later minimized, the Gemoreh quotes the possuk "אחור וקדם צרתני ותשת עלי כפכה". Rashi clarifies that this possuk refers to the fact that Adam was fashioned twice — once tall and once lowly.

The version recorded in the Ein Yaakov reads: "וכיון שסרח הניח הקב"ה ידיו עליו והעמידו על מאה אמה" — after his transgression, HKB"H reduced him to a height



of one hundred cubits. This version also appears in the Yalkut Shimoni (Vaetchanan 827) and is apparently the version Rashi had in his Gemoreh, based on his comment there (Sanhedrin 100.): "כדאמרינן בחגיגה שמייעטו הקב"ה והעמידו על מאה אמה, שנאמר ותשת עלי כפך, Rashi draws an allusion from the fact that it states that HKB"H reduced Adam's stature with the palm of his hand, His כ"ף; the numerical value of the word כ"ף is one hundred — signifying that his new, reduced height was one hundred cubits.

The Rama"n writes (Sanhedrin 38:) that when the Gemoreh states that Adam's height extended from the earth to the heavens, it was not meant literally but was meant as a hyperbole. If so, what is the significance of the statement: "אדם הראשון מן הארץ עד לרקיע" — **Adam HaRishon extended from the earth to the heavens?** Additionally, if these statements are not to be taken literally, what is the message conveyed by the fact that Adam's height after the sin was set at one hundred cubits?

To answer these questions, let us examine the purpose of man's creation, as stated by HKB"H Himself via the prophet (Yeshayah 43, 21): "עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתי — **I fashioned this people for Myself, to sing My praise.** We can only wonder: (a) why does HKB"H, the exalted, all-powerful king, require the praise of lowly creatures composed of flesh and blood? (b) one of the principles of our belief and religion is that HKB"H did not create the world, chas v'shalom, for His own benefit, since He is the epitome of perfection and lacked for nothing, even before the creation of the universe; He created the world for the benefit of its creatures. What then is the meaning of the statement: "עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתי יספרו" — **I fashioned this people for Myself, to sing My praise?**

**The Prayers and Expressions of Gratitude  
Connect Man with His Master**

It appears that we can resolve this inquiry based on an important principle brought in the sefer Matzmiach Yeshuos. A person feeling great distress once asked Rabbi Reb Bunem of Peshischah, zy"n: why do we find people who do not put on tefillin and desecrate the Shabbos, yet they possess great material wealth, while Torah-observant Jews struggle to make a living? The great Rabbi Reb Bunem responded with a tremendous insight.

If we examine the punishments meted out to the participants in the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, we find a striking difference between Adam and Chava's

punishments and that of the serpent. Adam was punished as follows (Bereishis 3, 19): "בזעת אפריך תאכל לחם" — **by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.** Chava's punishment was (ibid. 3, 16): "בעצב תלדי בנים" — **with suffering you will bear children.** On the other hand, the primeval serpent, who sinned and caused others to sin was punished with the following (ibid. 3, 14): "ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך" — **and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.**

Regarding the serpent's punishment, the Gemoreh explains (Yumeh 75.): "קילל את הנחש, עולה לגג, מוזנותיו עמו, יורד למטה מוזנותיו עמו" — wherever the serpent goes, his food and sustenance is readily available. Seemingly, this is a puzzling punishment. Adam and Chava's punishments are more apparent; but what is the punishment in the fact that the serpent's sustenance is readily available in all places? Seemingly, this appears to be a blessing; the serpent does not have to work or bother to sustain himself.

The truth, however, is that the greatest reward any living creature can realize is his connection with HKB"H and his dependence on HKB"H for his sustenance. In the words of Yisroel's pleasing song-writer (Tehillim 145, 15): "עיני כל אליך ישברו ואתה נותן להם את אכלם" — **the eyes of all look to You with hope, and You provide them their food in its proper time.** We even find that animals pray to HKB"H for their meals, as it is written (Tehillim 104, 21): "הכפירים שואגים לטרף" — **the lion cubs roar for their prey and to seek their food from G-d.**

This, in fact, is the message conveyed to Adam HaRishon after he sinned with the Tree of Knowledge and fell from his incredible prominence: "בזעת אפריך תאכל לחם" — **by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.** This punishment is actually for your own good. Due to your lack of sustenance, you will raise your eyes heavenward and pray to HKB"H for food — thus, you will remain connected with HKB"H. Similarly, when HKB"H proclaimed to Chava: "בעצב תלדי בנים" — **with suffering you will bear children**--once again, He was informing her that this was for her own good. While you are suffering in childbirth, you will plead with HKB"H for mercy and forgiveness and will, thus, remain connected with Him.

The primeval serpent, however, the source of spiritual contamination, was distanced from the realm of sanctity by HKB"H; so much so that HKB"H does not even want to hear his prayers. For this reason, his dreadful punishment was: "ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך" — **and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.** In other words,

you will find your sustenance readily available wherever you go and you will not need to pray to Hashem. This was tantamount to HKB"H telling the serpent: take your belongings and disappear; I do not want to see you nor hear your voice. Reb Bunem concludes his response to the question by explaining that this is why HKB"H sometimes provides the wicked with all of their needs, good health and riches — He does not wish to hear their voice in prayer before Him.

### The Parable of the Beloved Son that the King Longs to See Everyday

Come and see how this tremendous insight of Reb Bunem's is inherent in the teaching of the divine Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Yoma 76.):

“שאלו תלמידיו את רבי שמעון בן יוחי, מפני מה לא ירד להם לישראל מן פעם אחת בשנה, אמר להם אמשול לכם משל למה הדבר דומה, למלך בשר ודם שיש לו בן אחד, פסק לו מזונותיו פעם אחת בשנה, ולא היה מקביל פני אביו אלא פעם אחת בשנה, עמד ופסק מזונותיו בכל יום, והיה מקביל פני אביו כל יום, אף ישראל מי שיש לו ארבעה וחמשה בנים, היה דואג ואומר שמא לא ירד מן למחר, ונמצאו כולן מתים ברעב, נמצא כולן מכוונים את לבם לאביהן שבשמים.”

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's students asked him why it didn't suffice for the "mahn" to come down from the heavens for Yisroel just once a year. He replies with a parable. There was a king who had but one son; he allotted him his meals once a year; consequently, the son only came to see his father once a year. Then, he decided to allot his son meals on a daily basis; as a result, his son came to see him daily. Similarly, HKB"H wanted Yisroel to be concerned with issues of sustenance on a daily basis, so that they would approach their Father in Heaven on a daily basis.

In this same vein, we find the illuminating explanation of the Chasam Sofer, in Toras Moshe, concerning the formula of the berochoh after drinking water to satisfy our thirst: **“ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא נפשות רבות וחסרונן, על כל מה שבראת להחיות בהם — Blessed are Thou, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, Who creates numerous living things with their deficiencies; for all that You have created with which to sustain the life of every being. Blessed is He, the life of the worlds.** This berochoh expresses our gratitude to Hashem for two things — the first is for the simple fact that he created us: **“בורא נפשות רבות.”**

Yet, even more importantly, we thank Hashem for creating us with deficiencies deliberately: **“וחסרונן.”**

This insures that we turn to Hashem to fill our needs and deficiencies; thus, we are constantly aware of Hashem's favors and thank Him on a regular basis for filling our deficiencies. This deliberate creation of deficiencies is the more significant of the two matters. For, due to these deficiencies: **“ברוך חי העולמים”** — we will merit having a relationship with HKB"H both in this world and the World to Come.

We have now gained a better appreciation of HKB"H's statement to Yisroel: **“עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתי ויספרו”** -- **I fashioned this people for Myself, to sing My praise.** This does not mean, chas v'chalah, that HKB"H seeks human praise for His own benefit. Rather, He seeks our praise specifically for Yisroel's benefit. HKB"H created Yisroel with deficiencies that need to be filled; this insures that they pray to Hashem, and then they express their gratitude and recognize the favor that He has performed on their behalf. This process guarantees that they will remain attached to Hashem fulfilling the words of the possuk (Devorim 4, 4): **“ואתם הדבקים בה' — אלקיכם חיים כולכם היום”** — **you who remain attached to Hashem, your G-d, you are all alive today.**

### Adam HaRishon Extended from the Earth to the Heavens

Taking the high road, let us proceed to decipher the sages' enigmatic statement: **“אדם הראשון מן הארץ עד לרקיע... וכיון שסרח הניח הקב"ה ידיו עליו ומיעטו”** — Adam HaRishon extended from the earth to the heavens; after sinning, HKB"H placed His hands upon him and reduced him in stature. First, let us present an insightful explanation found in the Ohr Meir (Shir HaShirim) brought in the name of his teacher and master, the holy Maggid of Mezritsch, zy"a. He says that when our sages describe Adam HaRishon as reaching from the earth to the heavens, they mean that before the sin, he had an incredible natural ability to perceive how all material matters were directly connected to Hashem.

It is as if he was standing with both feet on the ground, occupied with earthly concerns, and his head extended to the heavens — having in mind that these earthly concerns were being performed for the sake of Heaven. This is the ideal expressed by the Mishnah (Ovos 2, 12): **“וכל מעשין יהיו לשם שמים”** — **all of your deeds should be performed for the sake of Heaven.** Unfortunately, after being enticed by the primeval serpent to sin, he was reduced in stature; hence, he no longer possessed this ability to unite his deeds and his intent for the sake of Heaven on a constant basis.



Following the Maggid of Mezritsch's lead, I would like to propose my own interpretation of the continuation of the Gemoreh: **”כיון שסרח הניח הקב”ה ידיו עליו ומיעטו, שנאמר אחור וקדם צרתני ותשת עלי כפכה”** — **once Adam sinned, HKB”H placed His hands upon him and reduced him in stature, as it says: “Later and earlier You formed me and You placed Your palm upon me.”** Recall that Rashi comments (Sanhedrin 100.): **”שמיעטו הקב”ה והעמידו על מאה אמה, שנאמר ותשת עלי כפך, כ”ף בגימטריא הכי הוי”** — **HKB”H reduced Adam's height to one hundred cubits; this is alluded to by the word כ”ף, meaning the palm of his hand, which has a numerical value of one hundred.**

As the Toras Chaim explained, once Adam was persuaded to adopt the serpent's lack of gratitude and appreciation for Hashem's favors, he deserved to lose his entire stature and to grovel in the dust and crawl on his belly like the serpent. Nevertheless, since HKB”H is merciful and generous, He provided Adam with a remedy for his injurious shortcomings — He diminished his height to one hundred cubits.

By doing so, HKB”H wished to convey to Adam that if he wanted to repair the damage done to his sanctified stature — and not to have his legs removed and lose his entire stature like the serpent — he should maintain a height and stature of one hundred cubits by reciting one hundred beroches each day. These one hundred beroches address all of our physical and spiritual needs. When recited with proper focus and intent, they express our deep gratitude for the privilege of being attached to Hashem. In the merit of these well-intended, one hundred beroches, man deserves to maintain a stature of one hundred cubits.

**David HaMelech a Reincarnation of Adam Instituted One Hundred Beroches**

Let us add the following noteworthy idea. It is known that David HaMelech was a reincarnation of Adam HaRishon, who donated seventy years of his life to David. This is taught by the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 14, 12): **”ע' שנה שחיסר אדם משנותיו ונתן לדוד בן ישי”**. Now, we can suggest a reason for why HKB”H only diminished Adam to one hundred cubits and did not confiscate all of his height as He did with the serpent. Since HKB”H foresaw that Adam HaRishon would reincarnate into David HaMelech, who instituted the concept of one hundred beroches each day, he merited, measure for measure, to have his stature diminished only to one hundred cubits.

In this light, it is fascinating to examine the possuk from which we learn that David HaMelech instituted one hundred beroches (Shmuel II 23, 1): **”ואלה דברי דוד — האחרונים נאום דוד בן ישי ונאום הגבר הוקם על”** — **these are David's last words: the speech of David the son of Yishai, the speech of the man who was established on high.** This possuk alludes to the very fact that David was a reincarnation of Adam HaRishon, whose stature was reduced after the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, and whose measure was set by HKB”H at one hundred cubits.

This is the significance of the phrase: **”נאום הגבר הוקם על”** — this is a reference to Adam HaRishon; his new height of one hundred cubits is alluded to by the word **ע”ל**, which has a numerical value of one hundred. David HaMelech intuited from this measurement the necessity to institute one hundred beroches per day. Hence, Chazal derive from the phrase **”הוקם על”** that David established the practice of reciting one hundred beroches.

This enlightens us to some degree as to why the punishment for someone who fails to bow down during “Modim” is that his spine turns into a serpent. As we have explained in the name of the Tosafists, the numerical value of **מודים** is one hundred — corresponding to the one hundred beroches that one is obligated to recite every day. We bow during “Modim” to indicate that we do not stand defiantly upright like the primeval serpent — before his legs were cut off for failing to submit to Hashem's will and sovereignty. We bow down to Hashem and recognize all of the kindness He does on our behalf each and every day: **”על חיינו המסורים בידך, ועל נשמותינו הפקודות לך, ועל נסיך שבכל יום עמנו”**. Furthermore, we are thankful and rejoice over the fact that this expression of gratitude itself provides us with a means of remaining closely attached to HKB”H.

According to this understanding, it turns out that one who fails to bow down properly during “Modim,” reveals his refusal to submit to HKB”H; it is as if he is stating that he would be better off if he were not lacking for anything and did not need to thank Hashem daily for fulfilling his needs. Therefore, he is punished, measure for measure; his spine turns into a serpent — the creature whose punishment after the sin of the Tree of Knowledge was: **”ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך”** — his sustenance is readily available everywhere, so that he is kept far away from the realm of kedusheh and will not need to pray to Hashem.