

## The Incredible Connection between Parshas Shoftim and the Month of Elul

# א'חת ל'מעלה ו'שבע ל'מטה אל"ל Alluding to the Neshomeh's Control over the Seven Gateways to the Soul

With Hashem's favor, we have auspiciously entered the month of Elul. The first week of Elul is always associated with Parshas Shoftim. Hence, it is most fitting that we investigate the deeper connection between the month of Elul and Parshas Shoftim. Let us begin by examining the essence and nature of the month of Elul. There are forty days from the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom HaKippurim; these are days of mercy and goodwill. During this period of forty days HKB"H willingly forgives Yisroel for all of their transgressions.

The nature of these days stems from the fact that it was precisely during these forty days that Moshe Rabeinu ascended Har Sinai for the third time to receive the second set of luchos. This, of course, was in the aftermath of the "cheit haegel"—which prompted Moshe to break the first set of luchos; he then spent forty days beseeching HKB"H to forgive Yisroel. Finally, on the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul, he ascended the mountain for the third period of forty days—returning after forty days on Yom Kippur with the second set of Luchos. Ever since then, this forty day period has been established as a time of mercy and divine goodwill. The Tur writes (O.C. 581) in the name of the Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (46):

**"תניא בפרקי רבי אליעזר, בראש חודש אלול אמר הקב"ה למשה (דברים י א) עלה אלי ההרה, שאז עלה לקבל לוחות אחרונות, והעבירו שופר במחנה משה עלה להר שלא יטעו עוד אחר עבודה זרה, והקב"ה נתעלה באותו שופר שנאמר (תהלים מז ו) עלה אלקים בתרועה וגו' [ה' בקול שופר], לכן התקינו חכמינו ז"ל שיהו תוקעין בראש חודש אלול בכל שנה ושנה וכל החודש, כדי להזהיר ישראל שיעשו תשובה, שנאמר (עמוס ג ו) אם יתקע שופר בעיר וגו' [ועם לא יחרדו] וכדי לערבב השטן."**

A shofar was sounded throughout the encampment of Yisroel on the day that Moshe ascended the mountain for the third time. This served as a warning that they should not stray again. According to the possuk in Tehillim (47, 6), HKB"H also ascended with the sounding of the shofar. To commemorate

these events, our blessed sages instituted the blowing of the shofar annually throughout the month of Elul, beginning on Rosh Chodesh. This is a warning for Yisroel to perform teshuvah and also acts to confuse the soton.

We are all familiar with the famous allusion to the month of Elul—described by the Avudraham—originating from the possuk (Shir HaShirim 6, 3): **"אני לדודי ודודי לי"**—I am devoted to my Beloved and my Beloved is devoted to me. The first letters of these four words spell the name **אלול**. It was during this month that HKB"H accepted Yisroel's sincere teshuvah with open arms. The Bnei Yissoschor mentions this allusion with a noteworthy addition (Elul 1, 15):

**"אמרו דורשי רשומות אני לדודי ודודי לי ראשי תיבות אלול, שאז השי"ת פותח יד לקבלינו בתשובה ונפשות ישראל עורגות לו וינהו אחרי ה'... סופי תיבות של ד' תיבות הללו המה ד' יודי"ן בגימטריא ארבעים, מרמזין לארבעים יום שהיה משה בהר לקבל לוחות האחרונות מן ראש חודש אלול עד יום הכפורים והמה עד היום ימי הרצון."**

Not only is there an allusion in the first letters of the words **אני לדודי ודודי לי**, there is also an allusion in the last letters. Those four "yud"s possess a numerical equivalent of forty—alluding to the forty days that Moshe was on the mountain to receive the second luchos.

### Forty Days Correspond to the Formation of a Fetus

The fact that Moshe Rabeinu stayed up on Har Sinai precisely forty days to receive both the first luchos and the second luchos can be explained based on what we have learned in the Gemoreh (Bechoros 21b): **"יצירת הוולד באשה ארבעים יום"**—the formation of a fetus in a woman takes forty days. This teaches us that it requires a period of forty days to change one's nature and to transform a person into a new creature.

We can now comprehend why Moshe Rabeinu ascended to the heavens for forty days to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisroel. That period of time constituted the transformation of Yisroel into a brand new entity—the nation of the Torah. Seeing as the “cheit haegel” spoiled the initial transformation, a second forty day period of transformation became necessary. During the latter forty day period, they were transformed into a new entity by means of teshuvah. The Seforno describes this sequence of events as follows (Shemos 24, 18):

”ויהי משה בהר. בכל פעם שעלה שם מכאן ואילך שהה ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה כימי יצירת הולד, לקנות תחתיו שם הויה נכבדת, ראויה לשמוע מפי הרב מה שלא ישיגהו זולתו, כמו שהעיד באמרו (שמות לד כט) כי קרן עור פניו בדברו אתו, וקלקל זה חטאם בסוף ארבעים יום ראשונים, בעת שהיה ראוי להשיגו, כאמרו (שם לב ז) לך רד כי שחת עמך... והושג זה בארבעים יום אחרונים.”

The Seforno adds that with each forty day period of transformation, they acquired the sanctity of the name Havaya. Otherwise they would not have been able to comprehend the lessons presented by the teacher. Since their sin at the conclusion of the first forty day period ruined the first acquisition, a second acquisition was necessary.

### From Rosh Chodesh Elul until א'חת ל'מעלה ו'שבע ל'מטה

After pondering the matter, I would like to suggest a novel explanation for the significance of the name Elul—which came from Bavel along with the names of the other months. The name “אלול” is an abbreviation for א'חת ל'מעלה ו'שבע ל'מטה—meaning “one above and seven below”—alluding to the service of the Kohen Godol in the Kodosh HaKodoshim on Yom HaKippurim. The blood of the Kohen Godol's sin-offering—from a bull—and Yisroel's sin-offering—from a goat—were sprinkled: א'חת ל'מעלה ו'שבע ל'מטה—one above and seven below.

Concerning the blood of the bull sin-offering, the possuk states (Vayikro 16, 14): “ולקח מדם הפר והזה באצבעו על פני הכפורת קדמה, ולפני הכפורת יזה שבע פעמים מן הדם באצבעו”—he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle with his finger upon the eastern front of the kaporet; and in front of the kaporet, he shall sprinkle seven times from the blood with his finger. Rashi explains: “והזה באצבעו, הזאה אחת במשמע, “and ולפני הכפורת יזה שבע, הרי אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”—“and sprinkle with his finger” implies one sprinkling; “and in front of the kapores, he shall sprinkle seven” teaches us that over all there was one sprinkling above and seven below. Concerning the sprinkling of the he-goat sin-offering, it is written (ibid. 15): “ושחט את שעיר החטאת אשר לעם והביא את דמו אל מבית”

לפרוכת, ועשה את דמו כאשר עשה לדם הפר והזה אותו על הכפורת “ולפני הכפורת”—he shall slaughter the he-goat sin-offering of the people and bring its blood within the curtain; he shall do with its blood as he had done with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the kaporet and in front of the kapores.

Thus, the wonderful allusion in the name Elul--א'חת ל'מעלה ו'שבע ל'מטה—one above and seven below—teaches us that from the very onset of the people of Yisroel's transformation, during this period of teshuvah, they are already focused with great anticipation on the completion of the process on Yom HaKippurim. On that day when the Kohen Godol sprinkles א'חת למעלה ושבע ל'מטה, they will become like an entirely new entity.

Yet, it is incumbent upon us to explain and understand the significance of HKB”H's command that the Kohen Godol sprinkle the blood on Yom HaKippurim in precisely this manner: “אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”—one above and seven below. Additionally, we must explain the rationale behind the unique manner in which the Kohen Godol counted the sprinklings. We recall this procedure in our Mussaf prayer on Yom HaKippurim, and the source is the Mishnah (Yoma 53b):

”נטל את הדם ממני שהיה ממורס בו, נכנס למקום שנכנס [לבית קדשי הקדשים. רש"י] ועמד במקום שעמד [בין הבדים] והזה ממנו אחת למעלה ושבע למטה... וכך היה מונה אחת, אחת ואחת, אחת ושתיים, אחת ושלוש, אחת וארבע, אחת וחמש, אחת ושש, אחת ושבע.”

... and thus he would count: one, one and one, one and two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven.

Our blessed sages in the Gemoreh (ibid. 55a) question why he would repeat a count of “one,” representing the single sprinkling above, with each of the subsequent seven sprinklings below. They answer: רבי אלעזר אמר שלא יטעה “אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”—Rabbi Elazar said: So that he would not err in the counting of the sprinklings. According to Rashi, this allowed him extra time between the sprinklings to concentrate on the counting procedure and not to err. In any event, we must still endeavor to make some sense of the sprinkling protocol. What is the significance of sprinkling: “אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”—one above and seven below? Beyond Rabbi Elazar's answer and Rashi's explanation, what is the deeper significance for the Kohen Godol including a count of “one” with each of the subsequent sprinklings below?

### The Ramoh's Incredible Explanation

To achieve a better understanding of the matter, let us luxuriate in the concealed illumination of the great luminary, the great possek, the Ramoh, Rabbi Moshe Isserles, zy”a, in his

sefer Toras HaOlah (Part 2, Chapter 26). He explains incredibly that **“אחת למעלה”**—the one sprinkling directed upward—alludes to the yetzer tov—the good inclination—that assists a person to elevate himself spiritually and direct all of his efforts solely toward Hashem. In contrast, the **“שבע למטה”**—seven sprinklings directed downward—allude to the yetzer hora who is known by seven different names, corresponding to the seven forces that draw a person downward spiritually causing him to transgress.

In this manner, he explains the rationale for the Kohen Godol’s peculiar counting procedure. He added a **“one”** preceding the count for each of the seven downward sprinklings, in order to influence the seven forces of the yetzer hora positively by joining them with the yetzer tov. Here are his hallowed words:

**“כבר נודע הזאות יום כפורים שהיא אחת למעלה ושבע למטה... והטעם שהיו רומזים על ענין יצר הרע המחטיא האדם והוא נקרא בשבעה שמות, ולכן היה זורק שבע הזאות למטה ואחת מלמעלה שהוא נגד יצר טוב, והיה מונה עם כל הזאות שלמטה [את ההזאה] שלמעלה, כמו שאמרו (יומא נג): וכך היה מונה [אחת, אחת ואחת, אחת ושתיים, אחת ושלוש] כו', להורות כי מן הראוי לשתף יצר הרע עם יצר הטוב ואז שניהם כאחד טובים, והיה זורק כמו שנאמר (יחזקאל לו-כה) וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים.”**

As mentioned, the seven sprinklings downward allude to the yetzer hora—who causes man to transgress and is known by seven different names; the one sprinkling upward alludes to the yetzer tov. The counting procedure—counting **“one”** for the yetzer tov with each of the downward sprinklings—is designed to join the yetzer hora with the yetzer tov in order to create two positive influences.

Elsewhere (Part 3, Chapter 59), he adds that the **“אחת למעלה”**—one sprinkling upward—represents the Neshomeh in the brain—which is man’s yetzer tov that battles his internal yetzer hora. He expresses this idea as follows:

**“ולזה היה זורק בדמים אלו על הפרוכת שבע למטה ואחת למעלה... וזה כי היצר הרע יש לו שבעה שמות כמדרשם ז”ל (סוכה נב.), והם מדרגות היצר הרע זה למעלה מזה, הנקשרים בחומר ונופלים תחת מספר השבעה ימים, והם מביאים את האדם למטה, אמנם הנשמה יחידה היא, והוא השכל והיצר הטוב, היא אחת למעלה, אינה נופלת תחת המספר, ולכן נשאר אחת למעלה, והוא היה גובר להיזרק ולמנות עם התחתונים... ולכן היה מונה הזאה אחת עם כל הזאות מטה בהיות כי הוא עיקר הכוונה.”**

The seven names of the yetzer hora represent seven different levels of negative influences designed to draw man downward spiritually. Conversely, there is only one Neshomeh—

represented by his intellect and his yetzer hatov. Thus, it is referred to as **“one above”**; it is indivisible and cannot be counted or alluded to in any other manner. It exerts its influence and is counted with those below; it is the main focus.

### Transforming the Seven Names of the Yetzer Hora

Let us elaborate on this incredible explanation based on what we have learned in the Gemoreh (Succeh 52a): **“שבעה שמות יש לו ליצר הרע, הקב”ה קראו רע... משה קראו ערל... דוד קראו טמא... שלמה קראו שונא... ישעיה קראו מכשול... יחזקאל קראו צפוני”**—here the Gemoreh lists the seven names of the yetzer hora as they were given by HKB”H, Moshe, David, Shlomo, Yeshayah, Yechezkel and Yoel. According to the Ramoh, these seven names correspond to seven corporeal, material forces in this world, which correspond to the seven days of creation. The yetzer hora utilizes these forces to drag man down spiritually. Man’s job is to employ his yetzer tov to combat and overcome the yetzer hora. This is alluded to in the possuk in Mishlei (24, 16): **“כי שבע יפול צדיק וקם”**—though the righteous one may fall seven times, he will rise.

The Ramoh uses this idea to explain the rationale for the Kohen Godol adding a count of **“one”** to each of the seven downward sprinklings. For, the **“אחת למעלה”**—one sprinkled upward—alludes to the yetzer tov—which is the Neshomeh in the brain. Since it is entirely spiritual, being a part of G-d from above, it cannot be described in terms of numbers; it is one. Now, the Mishnah’s (Beroches 54a) elucidation of the possuk (Devorim 6, 5) is well known: **“ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך וגו', בכל לבבך”**—a person is commanded to love Hashem with all of his heart—referring to both his yetzer tov and his yetzer hora. In other words, it is man’s mission to convert his yetzer hora into a positive influence.

On the one hand, it is true that the yetzer hora possesses seven names corresponding to the seven material, corporeal forces prevalent in creation. Nevertheless, we are obligated to employ these forces by means of our Torah studies to serve Hashem. The Shulchan Oruch (O.C. 231) expresses this obligation as follows: **“בכל מה שיהנה בעולם הזה לא יכוין להנאתו”** אלא לעבודת הבורא יתברך כדכתיב (משלי ג-ו) **“בכל דרכיך דעהו, ואמרו חכמים (אבות פ”ב מ”ב) כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים”**. No matter what worldly mundane activity we are engaged in, we are advised not to focus on our own pleasure and self-gratification. Rather, even activities necessary for our continued existence in this world should be dedicated to the continued service of Hashem. The possuk in Mishlei (3, 6) states: **“In all your ways know Him. Our sages taught (Ovos 2, 12): “All of your deeds should be for the sake of heaven.”**

For this reason, the Kohen Godol included the count of “one” for the upward sprinkling with each of the subsequent seven downward sprinklings. This protocol alluded to the fact that it is necessary to elevate the yetzer hora with all seven of his worldly forces to unite with the yetzer tov; as a result, it too will be transformed into a force for good. In this manner, we can fulfill the positive commandment of: **“ואהבת את ה' אלקיך”** **“בכל לבבך וגו', בכל לבבך בשני יצריך ביצר טוב וביצר הרע”**—loving Hashem with all of one’s heart, including both yetzers.

### The Shevet Sofer’s Wonderful Interpretation of the Ramoh

At this point, it is appropriate to introduce the Shevet Sofer’s (Nitzovim) interpretation of the Ramoh. This work was authored by the great Rabbi Simchah Bunem Sofer, the grandson of our master, the Chatam Sofer, zy”a. In his view, when the Kohen Godol sprinkled “one above and seven below,” he had in mind to make a case proving Yisroel’s merit before HKB”H in the Kodesh HaKodoshim on Yom HaKippurim. The Gemoreh (Beroches 17a) presents a prayer recited by Rabbi Alexandri: **“רבון העולמים גלוי וידוע לפניך שרצוננו לעשות רצונך ומי מעכב”** **“שאוור שבעיסה”**—Master of the Worlds, it is revealed and known before You that our will is to perform Your will. And who prevents us from doing so? The yeast in the dough—the yetzer hora. This, too, is the message inherent in the Kohen Godol’s sprinkling and counting protocol in the Kodesh HaKodoshim on Yom HaKippurim.

Thus, the Kohen Godol presented his case before HKB”H: **“אחת למעלה”**— he sprinkled one above, indicating that there is but one way to connect with HKB”H above--by means of the yetzer tov. Conversely, **“שבע למטה”**—the seven below indicated that there are seven ways by which one can fall into the spiritual abyss as a result of the yetzer hora’s forces of evil. Therefore, it is appropriate for HKB”H to forgive Yisroel for all of their transgressions. The Shevet Sofer concludes: **“והוא”** **“רמז נפלא ודבר גדול גילה לנו הרמ”א בזה”**—this is an incredible message revealed to us by the Ramoh.

In my humble opinion, the Shevet Sofer intended to add a tiny morsel of his own to the words of the Ramoh—as is the way of all great Torah scholars, adding novel interpretations of their own to those of their predecessors. It appears that the Ramoh himself intended to present a practical explanation for the Kohen Godol’s protocol. His procedure was intended to extend kedusheh to all of Yisroel. He accomplished this feat by successfully placing the yetzer tov in control--**“אחת למעלה”**—over the yetzer hora--**“שבע למטה”**.

This is apparent from the words of the Ramoh. For, he explains that the reason the Kohen Godol includes **“אחת למעלה”** with each of the subsequent sprinklings below--**“שבע למטה”**—is to join each of the seven names of the yetzer hora with the yetzer tov and to transform them into a yetzer tov. This does not appear to be an argument on Yisroel’s behalf; in fact, one could condemn them for not having converted their yetzer hora into a force for good. Hence, the Shevet Sofer added his own novel interpretation of the Ramoh’s idea. According to his interpretation, the Kohen Godol was presenting a defense on behalf of Yisroel before HKB”H. Surely, the Ramoh in Gan Eden is deriving pleasure from the Shevet Sofer’s wonderful addition.

### You Shall Place Judges and Officers over the Seven Gateways to Your Soul

Continuing along this exalted path, let us explore in greater depth this explanation of the Ramoh’s (Toras HaOlah) concerning the Kohen Godol’s service on Yom HaKippurim: **“אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”**—sprinkling the blood of the sin-offerings “once above and seven times below.” Let us introduce what the Bnei Yissoschor (Elul 1, 10) writes with regard to the connection between Parshas Shoftim and the month of Elul:

**“בהתחלת אלול קורין תמיד סדר (דברים טז יח) שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך וכו', שזהו התחלת התשובה ועיקרה, אשר הבעל תשובה מחויב להושיב שופט ושוטר אצל כל שעריו, דהיינו כל החושים אשר המה שערים באדם שפתחם הבורא יתברך שמו להשתמש עמהם, כגון עינים ואזנים וחוטם ופה, מחויב האדם להושיב הדעת לשופט, אצל כל שער ישפוט בצדק, את אשר ישתמש בחושים ואת אשר יניח.**

**ושוטר הוא אשר יעניש את העובר, כמו כן יושיב האדם שוטר את אשר יעניש, היינו אם יזדמן אשר יסתכל בעיניו בדבר האסור או ידבר בפיו את אשר לא ירצה לה', יקבל על עצמו עונש, הן בממון לצדקה, והן בגוף בסיגוף ותענית וכיוצא, וכמו שנהגו תלמידי הרמ”ק ז”ל, וזהו עיקר גדול לתשובה, הארכתי בספרי אגרא דכלה”.**

At the beginning of Elul, we always read Parshas Shoftim; for this is the beginning of the process of teshuvah and its essence. It is critical for one who performs teshuvah to place a judge and monitor at each of his gateways. His gateways are his senses which the Almighty opened for him to function in this world. They are his eyes, ears, nose and mouth. A person is obligated to use his knowledge and common sense to judge and evaluate that these senses are being put to proper use.

Simultaneously, an officer is required to monitor and punish one who transgresses. In similar fashion, if a person is aware that he is looking at things that he should not or speaking things that violate Hashem’s will, he must accept upon himself a fitting punishment—such as giving money to tzedokah or some form of physical deprivation such as fasting.

In his sefer Agra D'Kalleh (Shoftim), he elaborates on this concept based on what we have learned in Sefer Yetzireh (4, 12): **“ואלו הן ז' ימים בשנה - שבעה ימי בראשית. ושבעה שערים: (4, 12)”—**there are seven days in the year, the seven days of creation; and there are seven gateways to the soul: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth.

He explains that we are required to place the Neshomeh in our brain in control over the seven openings that exist to one's soul. The Neshomeh must use the intellect to weigh every circumstance and judge whether or not it is proper to engage one's senses. Here is an excerpt of his magnificent insight:

**“שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך. נראה לי לפרש על ז' שערים שפתחם הבורא יתברך בראש האדם, שמהם יוצא ההבל ועשויים להכניס ולהוציא כדמיון השער, דהיינו ב' עינים, ב' אזנים, ב' נקבי החוטם, והפה... והם עיקר החושים המשמשים לאדם, וצריך לשעבד כולם להבורא יתברך, לבל יביט, ולא יטה אוזן, ולא יריח, ולא ידבר, ולא יאכל וישתה, רק מה שנוגע לכבוד הבורא יתברך שמו.**

וצריך להמשיל השכל השורה במוח על כל השערים הנ"ל, דהיינו לשפוט בצדק איזה דבר יביט וישמע ויריח וידבר ויאכל, ומאיזה מהן ימנע. וזהו שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך, הן הנה הז' שערים הנ"ל תתן לך בכל שער שופט, לשפוט בצדק השכל איזה ענין יביט או לא, וכן בשמיעה וריח ודיבור, וכן תתן לך שוטר - לקנוס באם יעבור על דברי השופט, באיזה שער אשר ה' אלקיך נותן לך לשבטיך.”

This is the implication of: **“שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל”**—judges and officers shall you place at all of your entryways. This is a reference to the seven gateways that the Almighty placed in man's skull. They allow things in and out like an actual gate. They are man's two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and his mouth; they are the senses that serve a person; they must be controlled and employed solely in the service of the Creator.

The intellect in one's brain must reign over these gateways—deciding what to look at, what to listen to, what to say, what to eat and conversely which things to avoid. This is the meaning of this possuk. At each of these entry points to man's inner self, he must use his intelligence as a judge and must police himself if he violates their proper usage.

We should note that the Sheloh hakodesh on our parsha already expounded on this possuk with a similar interpretation: **“שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך”**; however, he adds one significant detail. He states that the two nostrils are related to anger; hence, with regard to the nose, it is our job to guard against anger. He concludes that all of our gateways must be guarded constantly so that they remain sanctified and pure and free of sin.

## **“One Above” Corresponds to the Neshomeh in the Brain “Seven Below” Corresponds to the Seven Gateways**

Now, come and see how this amazing concept proposed by these holy authors coincides beautifully and illuminates the words of the Ramoh in Toras HaOloh. He taught us that the Kohen Godol sprinkles the blood on Yom HaKippurim: **“אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”**—one above and seven below—with the intent of placing the yetzer tov--the Neshomeh in the brain, the “one above”—in control over the yetzer hora—represented by the “seven below.” It is represented thusly due to its seven names corresponding to its seven forces of evil aimed at defiling the seven gateways to man's soul. They exert their negative influence so that man will utilize his senses, chas v'sholom, in a manner contrary to Hashem's will.

Thus, when the Kohen Godol sprinkled the blood in this fashion on Yom HaKippurim: **“אחת למעלה ושבע למטה”**—one above and seven below—he was imbuing Yisroel with the necessary kedusheh to properly fulfill our parsha's command: **“שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך”**-- judges and officers shall you place at all of your entryways. He empowered them to place the Neshomeh in the brain in control to act as a judge and an officer. The Neshomeh could now safeguard and patrol the seven gateways to the soul and insure that they be used solely to serve Hashem.

This also coincides very nicely with the Ramoh's explanation as to why it was necessary for the Kohen Godol to include the additional count of “one” with each of the subsequent seven sprinklings below. He was making sure to unite the yetzer tov with each of the yetzer hora's seven negative forces in order to transform them into positive forces. Now, according to our current understanding, the Kohen Godol was imparting kedusheh to all of Yisroel to insure the reign of the Neshomeh over each of the seven entry points to the soul—to fulfill the dictum of: **“שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך”**-- judges and officers shall you place at all of your entryways.

Alas, we can rejoice at having shed some light on the significance of the allusion in the name of the month Elul: **אלול** - **אחת למעלה ושבע למטה**. This allusion serves as a reminder that during this month of teshuvah, it is incumbent upon us to insure that the Neshomeh—the **“אחת למעלה”**—reigns over the seven gateways to the soul—the **“שבע למטה”**. In this light, the reason why Parshas Shoftim always falls during the first week of Elul is quite obvious. We are being encouraged and motivated to fulfill the words of our opening possuk to their fullest extent: **“שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך אשר ה' אלקיך נותן לך לשבטיך ושפטו את העם משפט צדק”**—judges and officers shall you place at all of your entryways which Hashem,

your G-d, gives you—for your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.

### The Havdoleh Ritual Employs All Seven Gateways

I have been inspired based on this discussion to propose an explanation concerning the Havdoleh service on motzaei Shabbes. Let us examine the language of the Mishnah in Sefer Yetzireh (4, 7): “ואלו הן ז' ימים בשנה - שבעה ימי בראשית. ושבעה - ושבעה שבעים בנפש - שתי עינים, שתי אזנים, ושני נקבי האף והפה, ובהן נחקקו שבעה רקיעים ושבע ארצות ושבע שעות, לפיכך חבב שביעי” לכול חפץ תחת השמים” The Mishnah lists essential sevens that are prevalent in creation such as the seven days of the week, the seven orifices in the skull, the seven firmaments, etc. The Mishnah concludes that therefore the seventh item is dear and possesses a special status. Just as the seventh day is the most precious, so, too, is the seventh gateway—the mouth—the most precious.

Due to this association, it is reasonable to posit that this is why Shabbes is the ideal time to engage in oral Torah study. The Tur states in the name of the Midrash (O.C. 290): “אמרה תורה: לפני הקב"ה, רבונו של עולם כשיכנסו ישראל לארץ זה רץ לכרמו וזה רץ לשדהו ואני מה תהא עלי, אמר לה יש לי זוג שאני מזווג לך ושבת שמו שהם בטלים ממלאכתם ויכולין לעסוק בך” Here the Torah voices its concerns before HKB”H that when Yisroel enter the land and are busy with their fields and vineyards, who will tend to the Torah? HKB”H replies that Shabbos will be its mate. For, on Shabbos, Yisroel neglect their work and are free to engage in Torah study. Similarly, Shabbes is the ideal time to increase our verbal praise of HKB”H. On Shabbes, the seventh day, we sanctify the mouth, the seventh gateway; the two are related and correspond to one another.

In truth, Shabbes as the seventh day corresponds to the seventh gateway; however, Shabbes is valued above all of the days and all of the gateways. The Zohar hakadosh states (Yitro 88a): “כל ברכאן דלעילא ותתא ביומא שביעאה תליין” —all blessings above and below depend on the seventh day.

In other words, the ability to place the Neshomeh in the brain in control over the seven gateways to the soul derives from the day of Shabbes. The Gemoreh teaches us (Beitzeh 16a): “נשמה יתירה נותן הקב"ה באדם ערב שבת ולמוצאי שבת —נוטלין אותה הימנו” HKB”H places an additional Neshomeh in man on erev Shabbes and takes it back from him on motzaei Shabbes. As a result, on Shabbes man is endowed with additional resources from above to enable him to place the Neshomeh in charge over the seven gateways to the soul throughout the seven days of the week.

At this point, let us mention a noteworthy allusion germane to this topic found in the sefer Bat Ayin (Shoftim). He points out that the numerical value of the words: “לך בכל שעריך” (שב"ת 702)) is the same as the numerical value of the word “שבת” (702). In keeping with what we have just learned, he is conveying the valuable message that on Shabbes, due to the presence of the “Neshomeh yeseireh,” man is able to fulfill the command of: “שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך” —appointing judges and officers at all of your gateways. We can also add another allusion. If one takes every other first letter in the phrase: “שופטים ושוטרים, תתן לך, בכל שעריך —i.e. the “shin,” the “tov” and the “beis” —we obtain the letters of the word “שבת”.

When we recite Havdoleh at the conclusion of the Shabbes, we are differentiating between the sanctity of Shabbes and the other six days of the week. Nonetheless, we wish to continue and extend the sanctity of Shabbes and its power to place the Neshomeh in control over the seven gateways of the soul to the days of the week to come. It is for this reason that our blessed sages instituted a Havdoleh service involving all seven gateways to the soul. The two eyes gaze upon the Havdoleh candle as we recite the berachah over the fire. The two ears listen attentively to all of the Beroches of the service. The two nostrils take in the scent of the spices. The mouth recites the Beroches of the Havdoleh service. In this manner, we extend the kedusheh of Shabbes to all six weekdays imparting the power to place the Neshomeh in the brain in control over the seven gateways to the soul.

Donated by Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb

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