

Introduction

Many know of Rav Salanter storied career as a head of a yeshivah and founder of the Musar Movement in Vilna and Lithuania. It is less known that for almost the second half of his life, Rav Yisroel Salanter moved to Western Europe and spent decades devoted to combat the ravages that the Haskalah (Enlightenment) and Reform had caused, turning masses of Jews away from the messorah (tradition).

It was during that period that he grew enamored of a book called Cheshbon HaNefesh, written by Rav Mendel (Leffin) Satanover, who while being fully Observant was in fact one of the early Maskilim.

Rav Yisroel felt that it was such an important and worthy primer on musar work that – despite its origin – he embraced and republished it, and encouraged his disciples to read and use it.

Here is a comparison, a list of Franklin's Virtues with the middos (characteristics) from Cheshbon haNefesh and Rav Yisrael Salanter that appear similar. <http://www.aishdas.org/asp/lists-of-middos>

1. MENUCHAS HANEFESH (Tranquility)

Rise above events that are inconsequential — both bad and good — for they are not worth disturbing your equanimity.

2. SAVLANUS (Patience)

When something bad happens to you and you did not have the power to avoid it, do not aggravate the situation even more through wasted grief

3. SEDER. (Order)

All of your actions and possessions should be orderly — each and every one in a set place and at a set time. Let your thoughts always be free to deal with that which lies ahead of you

4. CHARITZUS (Resolve)

All of your acts should be preceded by deliberation; when you have reached a decision, act without hesitating.

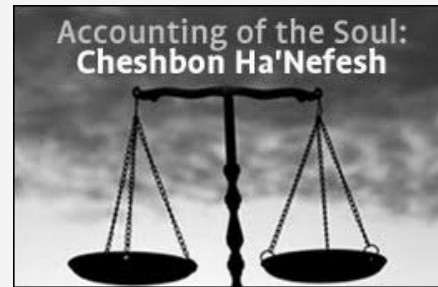
5. NEQIYUS (Cleanliness)

Let no stain or ugliness be found in your possessions or in your home, and surely not on your body or clothes

6. ANAVAH (Humility)

Always seek to learn wisdom from every man, to recognize your failings and correct them. In doing so you will learn to stop thinking about your virtues and you will take your mind off your friend's faults.

Accounting of the Soul



http://www.jewishpathways.com/files/Accounting_of_the_Soul_Cheshbon_HaNefesh.pdf

7. TZEDEQ (Justice)

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.

8. QIMUTZ (Frugality)

Be careful with your money. Do not spend even a penny needlessly

9. ZERIZUS (Industrious)

Always find something to do — for yourself or for a friend and do not allow a moment of your life to be wasted

10. SHETIQAH (Silence)

Before you open your mouth, be silent and reflect: "What benefit will my speech bring to me or others?"

11. NICHUSAH (Comforting)

The words of the wise are stated gently. In being good, do not be called 'evil'

12. EMES (Truthful)

Do not allow anything to pass your lips that you are not certain is completely true.

13. PERISHUS (Chastity)

Strengthen yourself so that you can stop lewd thoughts. Draw close to your [spouse] only when your mind is free, [occupied only] by thoughts of fulfilling your conjugal duties [to your spouse] or procreating.