

The Seven Middot of the Seven Weeks of Sefira

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Devor Kaye

Rav Daniel Frish ztz'l, one of the very great contemporary kabbalists, wrote a *sefer* on *sefirat ha'omer* entitled, *U'sefartem Lachem*. Let's explore some key ideas. Rav Frish writes that the process of moving from imperfection, which was the state we were in when we left Egypt, to being able to receive *Torah*, requires inner change. This means developing the seven traits we share in common with Hashem. When you count the omer, have these kavanot in mind, and realize they will be your test for the week.

The first trait is *chesed* which is revealing Hashem's goodness. It's going beyond the letter of the law, uncovering the part in you that's divine, and giving it voice and expression. It's wanting to reach wholeness and wanting to be like Avraham Avinu who personified this *middah*. This will affect one's relationship with Hashem and other people. The possibility of giving isn't always there, but the desire to give is always noble. It's the holiest and most genuine bond between us and Hashem. *Chesed* has to go through several prisms to work.

The first level is *chesed sheb'chesed* which is giving for its own sake, not because you want anything back. It's not giving to be validated as a giver nor to receive recognition. Then there's *gevurah sheb'chesed* which is using your ability to be strong to achieve good things. That means being willing to do battle, many times against oneself, to go the extra mile. Before I leave to work, I want to be a human to my kids and also have time to daven. I want to reveal my holy and higher self. Therefore, I will get up 20 minutes earlier even if it means I will be tired at night. I'm willing to overcome my comfort and be strong for *chesed*.

Next is *tiferet sheb'chesed* which is doing good in a beautiful way. This can mean external beauty, like setting a nice *Shabbat* table, or internally, being in a state of harmony when *Shabbat* comes in by getting ready early. Beauty is a mirror-you see your own beauty when you do beautiful acts. Next is *netzach sh'bechesed*, aiming to do good things that will leave an eternal impression. Almost any act of love can leave a long-term impact. Think of good deeds you can do that will be remembered and that will affect people. Next is *hod sheb'chesed*. *Hod* means splendor or honor. It might mean looking at creation and thanking the Creator for all His wonders, or praising people who benefited you. The last level is *malchut sheb'chesed* which is letting Hashem rule through the *chesed* you do.

The second *middah* is *gevurah*. A person has to be willing to struggle. Everyone has internal and external conflicts. Most struggles come down to conquering self, which is deciding who you really want to be. It might mean overcoming a desire for physical pleasure, fighting a battle against an external situation that is limiting, or even in the literal sense, sacrifice of the self. You're talking to someone and that person needs to be right. Give in and let him be right. Let go of yourself, don't win the battle. Even if you have to correct someone, let them be right initially. Let him have that moment of validation. If you need to say no, be strong, but do it kindly. Sometimes, you have to be uncompromising in your battle. *Gevura sheb'gvura* means saying no to places I won't go and things I won't do. But when you need to go to battle do it with *tiferet sheb'gevurah*- in a respectful way. Don't resort to yelling or to embarrassing people. *Gevura sheb'netzach* is

fighting for what is eternal, for what's worth fighting for. *Hod sheb'gevurah* is overcoming your sense of shame to express gratitude to someone who helped you out, rather than negating their contribution. *Yesod sheb'gevurah* means remaining loyal. As you fight your battles, be willing to say I'll overcome self for the sake of people who I care about and let Hashem rule.

Tiferet sheb'gevurah is the beauty of strength. Beauty is a dimension of truth. Truth is the whole picture. Every person's life is like a mosaic with hundreds of pieces. Each piece is part of the puzzle. Your life can be beautiful if you put everything in the right place in its right time. Oftentimes, you have to be able to look around you and say, "How can I be the best possible me in this situation?"

Let's say you're an older single. You have choices. You can blame people and rail about life not being fair or you can bring forth your inner beauty and use this time to develop yourself and help others. You have a close relative in your life who is not such a nice person. You could decide to be embittered, angry, or dismissive, or you could be beautiful and accept the person with her flaws, while at the same time protecting yourself. One of the Amaroim had a deranged mother. He would crouch on the floor and she would step on him to get into bed. He did it because he saw beauty in showing her deference. When he spoke publicly, she spit on him and he still treated her with honor. Beauty can not only be found in a relationship with wonderful people, but also in asserting your strength and dealing respectfully with people who aren't easy.

Bishul of Liquid

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson
Summary by Devora Kaye

What is the definition of *bishul*? When is something considered halachically cooked? The Gemara in *Shabbat* tells us, Rabbi Yehuda and Shmuel say, when cooking oil and water, if the liquid reaches the shiur of *yad soledet bo*, it's prohibited. *Yad soledet bo* is the *shiur* at which the belly of a newborn baby would start to become scalded. The poskim argue what temperature level that

would be. It ranges from 110F to as high as 160F. That means if you have uncooked water before *Shabbat* and you warm it up to 110F on *Shabbat*, you've violated *bishul*. Rav Ribiat says a lukewarm bath is about 100F, a hot bath could be 104F, average American hot tap water will be 120F, a hot class of tea is about 160F, and soup (which may be hotter because oil absorbs heat) can go up to 180F.

Another Gemara in *Shabbat* discusses an important leniency which is, "*Ein bishul acher bishul*." Once something was already cooked, reheating it, would not be a *d'oraysa* issur. The Gemara deals with a question of roasting onions, meat, or fish. It would only be permissible to reheat it on *Shabbat* if it was already cooked before *Shabbat*. Rabbi Elazar and Rav say it must reach the level of *machel ben*

[Continues on page 2](#)

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Continued from page 1

durusai. Rav Yochanon rules that if the food was already cooked to that level by a Jew, there's no *issur of bishul akum* anymore, if a non-Jew wants to cook it further. The Gemara further says that if the food reached *machel ben durusai* before *Shabbat*, one may leave the food on fire over *Shabbat* even without a *blech*. Rashi explains that the term *ben durusai* refers to thieves. A thief is always on the run and therefore eats his food in a semi-raw state. Rashi says *machel ben durusai* means it must be 1/3 of the way cooked. The Rambam disagrees and says it has to be 50% cooked.

Halacha defines two grades of *bishul*, depending on the object being cooked. Liquids goes by temperature. Once it reaches

yad soledet bo, *bishul* was accomplished. For solid foods, the shiur will be *machel ben durusai*, a 1/3 or 1/2 cooked. The reason for the differentiation is that cooking causes a fundamental, chemical, change in solid foods. Before it was raw and now as a result of cooking it becomes a new entity. In contrast, liquids are always defined by the paradigmatic water. When you heat up water, nothing changes, only the temperature.

How can you tell if the food is 1/3 or 1/2 cooked? Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that as food cooks it gets softer. When it reaches 1/2 or 1/3 of its tenderness, that would be *machel ben durusai*. The Chazon Ish disagrees and uses time as a marker. If a piece of meat normally takes two hours to cook fully, then according to Rashi,

machel ben durusai would be reached after 40 minutes of cooking, while the Rambam's shiur would be an hour.

Rav Feinstein points out that we really don't know the exact temperature of *yad soledet bo*. Therefore, to consider something cooked, we will assume *l'chumra* that it is when the liquid reaches 110F. However, since we don't know exactly (it might be as high 160F) it wouldn't apply to *Ein bishul acher bishul*. Therefore, one should never rewarm a liquid on *Shabbat* unless the temperature is higher than 160F. Many Rishonim rule that *Ein bishul acher bishul* only applies to dry food and not to liquids.

Travelling Through Life Accompanied by Tehillim Part 6 Class III

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn
Summary by Devora Kaye

In Tehillim, Chapter 2, David Hamelech says, "*Nashku bar-Kiss the son.*" He tells the nations, create an appreciative relationship with the Jewish people, understand that the world exists for what they are trying to accomplish, and connect to them, for that is your right to existence. The Midrash brings a parable. The wheat and the chaff argued, for whom had the farmer seeded his field. Then the farmer came, threw the chaff away, and gathered the wheat into piles and so to speak kissed it showing that he valued it. The Midrash explains that the nation are like the chaff, thinking they are on top of the world. The Jewish people tell them they are not what the world was created for. The prophet Malachi foretold that in the times of *Mashiach* there will be an otherworldly fire. Fire can give light and warmth, but it can also burn and

destroy. When *Mashiach* comes, there will be a strong spiritual revelation which will lead the nations, unable to sustain it, to shame and destruction. In contrast, the Jewish people will be fully capable of absorbing this spiritual light. Therefore, the *Midrash* says, "*Nashku bar,*" connect to my children, serve and learn from them, because a time will come when your way will be destroyed.

The *Midrash* brings another allegory. There was once a king who ruled over a vast empire. The people of one of his vassal states found disfavor in his eyes. The people wanted to pacify him, so they approached the king's son and begged him to go to his father and intercede. The son agreed and succeeded in mollifying the king. The people then went to the king to express praise and gratitude. The

king said, why are you thanking me, thank my son. The people of the state are the nations, the king is Hashem, and the son is the Jewish people. When *Mashiach* comes, all the nations will recognize Hashem, and want to praise Him. Hashem will then say, don't praise Me, praise the Jewish people, because if not for them the whole world would have been destroyed. The relationship of the nations to Hashem will be via the Jewish people. As they were secondary to them throughout history, so too will it be in the times of *Mashiach*. We will have a bond with Hashem, like a son to a father, while they will be like a servant to a master. We will have an unsurpassed relationship of love and closeness that will be borne out of thousands of years of dedicated service to the *Torah* and His name.