

## The Seven Middot of the Seven Weeks of Sefira Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb  
Summary by Devor Kaye

*Tiferet sheb'tiferet* means that one's honesty and love of truth should be beautiful. When you're studying *Torah*, you won't just turn the page, you'll try to delve deeper to get to the truth. You go to a class and you didn't grasp a concept, so you'll swallow your embarrassment and you'll ask the teacher. Your sense of beauty should be for things that are eternal. The most beautiful thing of all is a person of truth.

You can express gratitude in a beautiful way, your loyalty to people can be beautiful, and your willingness to let Hashem rule could be beautiful.

*Chesed, gevurah, tiferet* are the main *middot*, like the parents of the other four *middot-netzach, hod, yesod, and malchut*. *Chesed* is the desire to have a positive effect on the world, yourself, and others. This will affect your relationship with Hashem and other people. *Gevura* is a willingness to fight for things that are important. Do battle with yourself. Don't expect not to have inner struggles, it's part of life. Don't waste your energy over ridiculous things. Sometimes people get battle weary. Realize that Hashem

repays you for the struggle, not just for the achievement. The *Talmud* says that a person who is tempted to transgress and does battle against his *yetzer hara* is rewarded as though he accomplished something great. The battle gets its own reward. Live your life with beauty. Beauty is truth. Life can be harsh, but you could find a way to respond to all things with beauty.

*Netzach* is focusing on eternity, knowing what's lasting and what's not. That means studying *Torah* and being willing to support it. It's being a person who knows that the only transcendental reality that we have comes to us through the *Torah*. *Hod* is being willing to express gratitude and seeing the splendor and beauty of life and of people in your life. The *Sharei Orah* says that *yesod* means being able to create a firm foundation in your home and relationship with your family and others by basing it on Hashem's will. Concerning this it says, "*Tzadik yesod olam- a Tzadik* is the foundation of the world." The opposite of that is not taking relationships seriously and being disloyal. *Malchut* is making Hashem rule. You can only do that if you're not grabbing for the rulership yourself. *Malchut* has nothing of its

own. It's willing to say- "Where you want me to go, that's where I'll go; who you want me to be that's what I'll be; the way you want me to be that's what I'll be."

In order to be prepared on *Shavuot*, you have to have an appreciation of *Torah*. *Pirkei Avot* lists 48 ways in which the *Torah* can be acquired. If you want the *Torah* to be you, not something you just read, there are 48 ways to do it. Studying one way per day, till you get to the 49th day before *Shavuot*, is a way of responding to the sefirah reality. If you read the 48 ways, you'll notice that they correlate to the days of sefirah. These are precious days that don't come back. Get a *sefirah* calendar. Whether you started counting the days or not, start now. The goal isn't to just work on the *middah* of the day and then it's over. But rather, this is the day Hashem will likely test you in this trait and you'll have to make choices. Feel good about the struggles. Even if you lose, get up again and be courageous. Working through this process will take you to the point where you can say, "I'm ready to stand at Har Sinai and accept the *Torah* as my eternal possession."

## Bitachon Meaning of Trust- Suffering

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb  
Summary by Devora Kaye

The Gemara tell us that a person can go through suffering and death, although sin might not be the cause. If so, what is its purpose? Sometimes suffering comes in order to give a righteous person the opportunity to teach others. *Tzadikim* atone for the sins of their generations. Possibly they could have done more for them, either by their example or by rebuke. They are to some degree at least partially responsible for their generation. So sometimes their suffering is for experiential purposes. For some reason, the *tzaddik* wasn't able to teach the people in words, so he does so by example. It follows that suffering can sometimes be attributed to the *tzaddik* himself or to his generation, as a means to move them forward.

An example of this would be the death of Rav Elchanan Wasserman ztz'l. Before WWII, he

was in America on a fundraising mission. He had the opportunity to stay there, but he insisted on going back to Europe to be with his students. He wanted to show them how to die. That decision, which was far reaching, and which actually played itself out, wasn't because he deserved death, but because he understood his position.

Sometimes suffering isn't a *nisayon* or to be an example but is a part of Hashem's plan. Everyone starts off at a different point in life and we are each given a mission to accomplish. Some people are born sick and some are born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Everyone is meant to face different challenges and we are given the tools to face it.

Sometimes a child who is born sick is meant to be a means through which other people discover themselves. In this sense, the

suffering doesn't have as much to do with the person himself, at least in this worldly sense, although there is the idea of reincarnation, which would explain why he would be the one to come down and not someone else. It's worth it for a person to suffer in this world, if through their suffering they bring life to people. Everyone has trials and difficulties in order that we might earn the reward of the World to Come without shame. It's sweeter if we know it really belongs to us. A person who suffered in this world will have no shame in receiving reward in the Next World. It is what he deserves. This would apply even if the person who suffered made no choices. He paid his bills through bringing enlightenment to others.

This answers a deep question that most people are afraid to ask which is, "Where's justice?" In this world it's very hard to see it.

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You have to go beyond that. The Gemara asks about a sickness called *askara* (akin to pertussis) which is supposed to be the hardest of all deaths. The Gemara asks, what is it for? Rav Shimon answers, it's because of *bitul Torah* as the main purpose of a man is to speak out Hashem's wisdom. A young child is a vessel for which their parent's free choice is expressed. If the child needs his father, then of course he should take care him. However, when the child doesn't need him, and the father chooses the fulfillment of his own

emotional needs, like playing with his child, when he should be learning *Torah*, then the father may have failed the test and might need the awakening of seeing his child's life hanging by a thread, stricken with *askara*. From the child's point of view, his suffering in this world is worthwhile because he brought enlightenment to others. The same way a person can get his portion in *olam habah* through *Torah*, a person can get their portion in *olam habah* through suffering. When that suffering is the cause of other people coming to grips with

themselves, it's even greater.

What brought about our highest moments of recognizing Hashem's goodness was the suffering in Egypt and our redemption. We can say that this recognition justified the suffering. Hashem didn't put us in Egypt so he could save us and we could acknowledge His magnitude. The suffering was meant to have intrinsic power to bring us back to ourselves, to our essence, and to what our true purpose is.

## Travelling Through Life Accompanied by Tehillim Part 7

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

In this class we will explore Chapter 78 in *Tehilim* which teaches us how to understand history through the lens of *Tehilim*. This chapter was not written by David Hamelech but by Assaf, one of the Leviim who sang in the *Beit Hamikdash*. David Hamelech included it in *Tehilim* through Divine inspiration. The chapter contains 72 verses which discusses various events that happened to the Jewish people from the time of Moshe through the period when Hashem chose David Hamelech to be king. It speaks about the Ten Plagues of Egypt, the miracles and the complaints in the desert, the destruction of Shilo, the war between the Jews and the Pelishtim, the aron being taken away, and it ends with David Hamelech chosen as king.

The chapter begins with a preface which gives us an understanding of how to approach history. A Jew is obligated to remember six things; five of them are related to historical events. We must remember *yetziat Mitzrayim*, the giving of the *Torah*, the war with Amalek, the sin of the golden calf, and Miriam's negative speech. There is only one *mitzvah*

among this list which is to remember *Shabbat*.

In Devarim it says, "Remember the days of yore, understand the years of generation after generation, ask your fathers and they will recount, your grandfathers and they will tell you." This is echoed here in *Tehilim*- "Listen my people to my teachings, incline your ear to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable, I will explain riddles from antiquity. We have heard and known them and our fathers told us. We shall not withhold from their sons recounting to the final generations the praises of Hashem, His might and His wonders which He has wrought. He has established a testimony in Yaakov and He set down a *Torah* in Israel, which He commanded our forefathers to make them known to their sons. So that the final generation may know, children yet to be born will arise and tell their own children. So that they may place their trust in Hashem and not forget His words and safeguard His commandments." This means, in order to live the present properly, we have to know and understand what happened in the past.

The chapter begins with the words *Maskil*

*l'Asaf*. The root word of *maskil* is *sin kaf lamed* which is *sechel* – intellect. We are called to do something with our intellect here. *Maskil l'Asaf* adjures us to concentrate on the spiritual, to understand it via looking at the past. "Listen my people, to my teachings, incline your ear to the words of my mouth." The word for teaching in Hebrew is *Torah* which comes from the root word *l'horot*- to teach. But its more than to teach, it's showing a way, taking a path which will help us to understand history. The verse tells us to not only study the past, but to invest effort to understand what it is meant to impart. History teaches us lessons. And this verse tells us that the guide to understand it is the *Torah*. If we study what the *Torah* tells us about history, we can learn how to interpret our times as well. Although we don't have prophecy today, we still have an obligation to learn and understand history. In the beginning of this chapter, Assaf tells us -Go back to history, look at what the *Torah* tell us about events, and you will see that there are patterns that repeat themselves throughout history. Studying this chapter and the *Torah*, can give us the key to understand the events of our times.