

סֵפֶר שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי הַשּׁוּלָמִית

" *Return, return, O Shulammite* " (Song of Songs 7:1)

We are blessed to begin an awesome period of potential called Shovavim.

Here is a link for the Sefer we compiled of important learning for these days:

http://ish-tam.com/rav_drizin/Tikkun_Shovavim.pdf

Shovavim--which means "rebellious ones"--stands for those weeks in which our Jewish world reviews Torah portions Shemot through Mishpatim, and is a period of restriction, one that takes place during the darkest time of the calendar year.

Within this restriction, hinting to the Sefirah **Gevurah**/strength/discipline, we are told by the mystical masters to contemplate limiting our **Yesod**-energy appropriately.

Yesod means foundation and it corresponds to the genital area, the place of connection, intimacy, communication, intercourse, bonding.

Bonding means connecting; not only feeling for another, but being attached to him. Not just a token commitment, but total devotion. It creates a channel between giver and receiver. Bonding is eternal. It develops an everlasting union that lives on forever through the perpetual fruit it bears.

Bonding is the foundation of life. The emotional spine of the human psyche. Every person needs bonding to flourish and grow. The bonding between mother and child; between husband and wife; between brothers and sisters; between close friends. Bonding is affirmation; it gives one the sense of belonging; that "I matter", "I am significant and important". It establishes trust - trust in yourself and trust in others. It instills confidence. Without bonding and nurturing we cannot realize and be ourselves.

Bonding is an area which unfortunately is frequently blemished that we need turn our attention and intention.

So important is this time period that the Arizal says it has a more powerful impact than the 10 days of Teshuva, which also comes during a time of restriction, a time of **Din**/judgment, too. Traditionally the tikkun of the Shovavim period concerns atoning for male sexual misdeeds, the correction of damage to the Covenant, which means male ejaculation in halakhically unacceptable circumstances (*shivkhat zera le-batalah*). It would appear, however appropriate this ancient remedy, that a more general contemplative focus on **Yesod** and the deep psychological/spiritual reasons for misuse of

sexual energy might provide a more holistic repair for many of us post-moderns.

What came out was that it seems to me with Divine assistance that during Shovavim there is an elevation from the darkest depths of exile and slavery [parshat Shemot] until we receive our civil laws regulating behavior [parshat Mishpatim] 6 weeks later when already the sap has arisen in the trees in the holy land [Parshat Beshalach and Tu BeShevat].

We have a duty as is said in Chabad Chassidut, to "live with the times": The five books of Torah are the blueprint for creation. Each Torah portion presents one dimension of the vast eternal plan.

It appeared to me with Divine assistance of an important correlation with the Torah portions read during Shovavim portions, with plans to have contemplative meditation on the Parshiyot with this correspondence:

Shemot: **Malkut** of **Yesod**

Vayera: **Yesod** of **Yesod**

Bo: **Hod** of **Yesod**

Beshalach: **Netzah** of **Yesod**

Yitro: **Tiferet** of **Yesod**

Mishpatim: **Gevurah** of **Yesod**

השולמית **ספר שובי שובי** hints to doing Teshuva (**שובי שובי**) in the **Yesod** which correlates to **השולמית** Shalom, the place of wholeness and completion, the genital area.

We are translating this phrase from Song of Songs as "*You shall surely return and fix your libido energy to be whole and complete*"

It is our prayer that by focussing on the Torah portion of the week and the messages it provides, we will be able to emerge at the end of these six (6) weeks more whole, holistic, and holy than when we began:

from slavery to freedom,

from sorrow to joy,

from mourning to festivity,

from deep darkness to great light

and from bondage to redemption.

Week One: *Shemot*--Relationships **Malkut** of **Yesod**

The Ramban, Nachmanides, mystically writes in his introduction to the Humash that each word and letter of the Humash's text is 'A Name of Gd.' When we study or recite the verses of the Torah, we are coming into contact with Gd's Names.

What's in a name? And what's in a Name of Gd?

A name is how we relate to another being. When we call our friend by his or her name, we initiate a relationship with that person for however long or short amount of time that we communicate with him or her.

When we study the Torah and recite Gd's Names, we continuously communicate with and relate to Gd. We are calling out to Him by His Names and connecting with Him by attempting to understand His Torah.

Our Torah portion is called *Shemot*, from the opening verse of the Book of *Shemot*:

וְאֵלֶּה, שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַבָּאִים, מִצְרָיִמָּה:
אֶת יַעֲקֹב, אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ

1 Now these are **the names** of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt with Jacob; every man came with his household

These names all have intense symbolic meaning, for they define the soul root of each tribe as well as its own special tikkun.

And later in the portion we read of Moshe Rabbenu's reception of two special Names of Gd:

יְד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-מֹשֶׁה,
אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה; וַיֹּאמֶר, כֹּה
תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲהִיָּה,
שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם.

14 And **Gd** said to Moshe: '**I AM THAT I AM**'; and He said: 'Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel: **I AM** has sent me unto you.'

טו וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶל-
מֹשֶׁה, כֹּה-תֹאמַר אֶל-בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק
וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם;
זֶה-שְּׁמִי לְעֹלָם, וְזֶה זִכְרִי לְדֹר
דֹּר.

15 And **Gd** said moreover to Moshe: 'Thus shall you say to the children of Israel: **Hashem**, the **Gd** of your fathers, the **Gd** of Abraham, the **Gd** of Isaac, and the **Gd** of Jacob, has sent me unto you; this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations

Wow! There are a lot of Names there, each one standing for a particular relationship: **אֱלֹהִים אֶהְיֶה יְהוָה**

In kabbalistic literature, the word "Shem" or Name [the root of **שְׁמוֹת** Shemot] is a code-word for the Sefirah **Malkut**/Kingdom, the receptor of all flow from above. The Name associated with **Malkut** is **אֶדְנִי**, which is the way we pronounce Shem **יְהוָה** Havayah in both prayer and official reading. **אֱלֹהִים** according to the Zohar also relates to **Malkut**.

By calling Gd by the above Names, we establish relationship with Him through our communication: when we pray, we talk to Gd; when we study Torah, Gd talks to us.

By ignoring Gd and His Names, we are not privy to this relationship, as we see in this week's portion in the challenge of Pharaoh:

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה--מִי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
אֲשַׁמְעֶ בְּקוֹלִי, לְשַׁלַּח אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל:
לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֶת-יְהוָה, וְגַם אֶת-
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אֲשַׁלַּח.

2 And Pharaoh said: 'Who is **Hashem**, that I should hearken to His voice to let Israel go? I don't know **Hashem** and moreover I will not let Israel go.

We know from next week's portion that Pharaoh knew of the Name **Elokim**, from what his advisors told him concerning the plague of lice which they could not replicate:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחֹרְטָמִם אֶל-פַּרְעֹה,
אֲצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹהִים הוּא; וַיַּחֲזֹק לֵב-
פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא-שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם, כַּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר יְהוָה.

15 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: 'This is the finger of **Gd**'; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Hashem had spoken

During this first week, that of Shemot, which relates to the **Malkut** of **Yesod**, we should contemplate our relationships with others, in particular the dignity of us and them.

R. Simon Jacobson writes:

Malchut of Yesod: Nobility in Bonding

Bonding must enhance a person's sovereignty. It should nurture and strengthen your own dignity and the dignity of the one you bond with. Does my bonding inhibit the expression of my personality and qualities? Does it overwhelm the one I bond with?

Exercise for the week: Emphasize and highlight the strengths of the one with whom you bond.

Tikkun:

שְׁמוֹת Shemot can be parsed as **שֵׁן מוֹת** *Shin Mot*, with letter Shin representing Aish/fire, and Mot meaning "death."

A major problem in relationships is "consuming passion", fiery desire that ends up hurting more than helping.

Examine your relationship with your spouse, your significant other, your partner, family, friends.

With your spouse, focus on the sexual **fire** between the two of you, and how to better improve that communication. With others, contemplate the nature of the relationship and the "fire" that keeps it going. Determine how you can make your bonding ever better than it is, strengthening the dignity of both parties.

Week Two: Vayera--Revelation of Secrets

What's a secret?

Certainly not something written in a book, otherwise it would not be a secret!

Reb Shlomo Carlebach would say that a secret is of the heart. When we love another, we desire to reveal to them our secrets of the heart.

This is the most intense form of bonding.

Of Moshe, the Torah describes at its end:

וְלֹא-קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל,
כְּמֹשֶׁה, אֲשֶׁר רָאָהוּ יְהוָה, פָּנִים
אֶל-פָּנִים.

10 And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moshe, whom Hashem **knew** face to face

Please note that this is the same verb we read at the Torah's beginning:

וַיֵּדַע אֶת-חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ; וַתְּהַר.

1 And the man **knew** Eve his wife; and she conceived

"**Knowledge**" implies extreme closeness and the revelations in which no one else is privy.

In our Torah portion, we read:

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה;
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו, אֲנִי יְהוָה.

2 And Gd spoke unto Moses, and said unto him: 'I am Hashem ;

ג וַאֲרָא, אֶל-אַבְרָהָם אֶל-יִצְחָק
וְאֶל-יַעֲקֹב--בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי; וַשְּׁמִי
יְהוָה, לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם
3 and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and
unto Jacob, *Kel Shakkay*, but by My name Hashem
I made Me not **known** to them.

ד וְגַם הִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם,
לָתֵת לָהֶם אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן--אֶת
אֶרֶץ מִגְרֵיהֶם, אֲשֶׁר-גָּרוּ בָּהּ
4 And I have also established My covenant with
them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of
their sojournings, wherein they sojourned

Targum Onkelos on "And I appeared" וַאֲרָא is *v'itg'laiti/ And I revealed Myself*.

Hashem is telling Moshe--as well as us--that He revealed himself to the patriarchs with a relationship called **אֵל שַׁדַּי** "Gd Almighty". With Moshe, He increased his intimacy even more by revealing the secrets of the Name **יְהוָה**, which is explained as both "Master of All" and "He was, He is, He will be"

In kabbalistic literature, the Name **אֵל שַׁדַּי** *Kel Shakkay* is a code-word for the **Yesod**, the area in which we are devoting our attention for the first six weeks of Sefer Shemot.

Moreover, anytime the word *Berit/Covenant* is mentioned, it too hints to the **Yesod**. For example, Brit Milah (Bris Milah) is the name for circumcision of the male organ under command of Gd. In verse 4, Hashem's establishing His covenant (בְּרִיתִי) is further proof of our corresponding this week to **Yesod of Yesod** for purposes of Shovavim intent.

Sometimes we just can't give over secrets to others. Because of our own "stuff", we are blocked, "uncircumcised" as it were.

As Moshe himself complains:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: הֵן
אֲנִי, **עָרַל שְׁפָתַיִם**, וְאֵיךְ, יִשְׁמַע
אֵלַי פֶּרְעֹה.
30 And Moshe said before Hashem: 'Behold, I am
of **uncircumcised lips**, and how shall Pharaoh
hearken unto me?'

Sometimes, other folks' "stuff" prevents them from receiving from us:

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה כֵּן, אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל;
וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, מִקָּצֶר
רוּחַ, וּמֵעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה.
9 And Moshe spoke so to the children of Israel;
but they did not listen Moshe for impatience of
spirit, and for cruel bondage

So, perhaps this week we focus on the essential nature of bonding with others, which implies revelation of your self to them, and revelation of their selves to you.

R. Simon Jacobson writes on

Yesod of Yesod: Bonding in Bonding

Every person needs and has the capacity to bond with other people, with significant undertakings and with meaningful experiences. Do I have difficulty bonding? Is the difficulty in all areas or only in certain ones? Do I bond easily with my job, but have trouble bonding with people? Or vice versa? Examine the reasons for not bonding. Is it because I am too critical and find fault in everything as an excuse for not bonding? Am I too locked in my own ways?

Is my not bonding a result of discomfort with vulnerability? Have I been hurt in my past bonding experiences? Has my trust been abused? Is my fear of bonding a result of the deficient bonding I experienced as a child?

To cultivate your capacity to bond, even if you have valid reasons to distrust, you must remember that G-d gave you a Divine soul that is nurturing and loving and you must learn to recognize the voice within, which will allow you to experience other people's souls and hearts. Then you can slowly drop your defenses when you recognize someone or something you can truly trust.

One additional point: Bonding breeds bonding. When you bond in one area of your life, it helps you bond in other areas.

Exercise for the week: Begin bonding with a new person or experience you love by committing designated time each day or week to spend together constructively

Tikkun:

גילוי עריות *Gilui Arayot* means to refrain from sexual immorality (traditionally incest, bestiality, adultery).

It is one of the 7 Noahide laws commanded to all humans.

It is unlikely that we are tested with desire to have sex with an Arayot, one of the Biblically prohibited relationships.

But just as Targum Onkelos translated "appearing" as "revealing", so too should our focus this week be on **גילוי** "revelation".

What secrets do you wish to convey to loved ones?

What secrets do you wish them to convey to you?

Reread the section above by R. Simon, and see if you can put it into practice this week.

Week Three: *Bo*-Entrances:

This portion's beginning is confusing. Why does it say, "Come to Pharaoh?" Should it not say, "Go to Pharaoh?"

The Zohar Parshat Bo explains that this was the invitation for revelation of secrets:

אמר רבי שמעון, השתא אית לגלגל רזין, דאינון מתדבקין לעילא ויתמא, מה קתיב בא אל פרעה, לך אל פרעה מבעי ליה, מאי בא. אלא, דעייל ליה קודשא בריך הוא, אדרין בתר אדרין, לגבי תנינא קדא עלאה תקיפא, דכמה דרגין משתלשלין מניה. ומאן איהו. רזא דהתנין הגדול.

ומשה דחיל מניה, ולא קריב אלא לגבי אינון יאורין, ואינון דרגין דיליה, אכל לגביה דחיל ולא קריב, בגין דתמא ליה משתרש בשרשין עלאין.

כיון דתמא קודשא בריך הוא דדחיל משה, ושליתון ממנו אחרניו לעילא, לא יכלין לקרבא לגביה. אמר קודשא בריך הוא, (יחזקאל כ"ט) הנני עליה פרעה מלך מצרים התנים הגדול הרובץ בתוך יאוריו. וקודשא בריך הוא אצטרף לאתמא ביה קרבא, ולא אתרא. כמה דאתא אמר, אני ה', ואוקמוה רזא דתקמתא דהתנים הגדול הרובץ בתוך יאוריו לאינון מארי מדיו, דנדעין ברזיו דמאריהון

Rabbi Shimon said: Now it is proper to reveal secrets that are attached above and below. It is written: "*Come to Pharaoh*," but it should have said 'Go to Pharaoh'. What is the meaning of "*Come*"? He brought him in to the innermost rooms, to a very powerful crocodile, from which many levels evolve and come down. And what was it? It was the secret of the great serpent. Moses was afraid and approached only the rivers that were at his grade. But he feared the serpent itself, and did not approach because he saw that it was rooted in high sources. When the Holy One, blessed be He, saw that Moses was afraid and that other appointed messengers above could not approach him, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: "*Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great crocodile that couches in the midst of his streams*" (*Yechezkel* 29:3). The Holy One, blessed be He, had to wage war with him and no other. He said, "*I am Hashem*." They explained the secret of the wisdom of, "*the great crocodile that couches in the midst of his streams*," to those scholars of jurisprudence, who recognize the secret of their Master.

Moshe, the most humble of all, is scared. So Hashem paves his entrance to Pharaoh, a very dangerous man.

"*Come....with Me, Moshe*", I am opening up an entrance for you, and your humility and trust will cement our relationship even more.

"*Come*", instead of "*Go*" implies passivity, like the Sefirat **Hod**, which connotes reflection, enabling, and humility.

Our extra hints for this correspondence stem from the facts that

(1) This is our third week, the gematria of **בא** is 3, and **Hod** is the third from the bottom in our elevation.

(2) This is the 15th Torah portion since Simchat Torah, and **הוד** **Hod** is gematria 15.

Bo, "come" hints to making an entrance for others to enter, enabling others to increase their communication to you.

It is not coincidental that a Torah portion named "Come" falls during Shovavim.

(1) We read that when Yaakov Avinu had served his 7 years of working for Rahel, he went to Lavan and said:

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-לָבָן הִבֵּה אֶת-
אִשְׁתִּי, כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמַי; וְאֶבֹּאֶה,
אֵלֶיהָ. **21** And Jacob said unto Laban: 'Give me my wife,
for my days are filled, that **I may come** in unto
her.'

These bold words are Holy words: Yaakov wants to marry Rahel in holiness, and by "coming" into her, he will enable her to be a vessel to receive additional holiness.

(2) From the online dictionary: **come**: *Vulgar Slang* To experience orgasm.
n. Vulgar Slang also **cum** (*kum*) Semen ejaculated during orgasm

One describes the word "come" as Holy, two describes the pure physical act, without any sense of communication or heightened awareness from the connection.

So, perhaps the hint for us is to focus on the former, and to move away from the latter?

Hod also implies aesthetics, and this sense is found in our portion:

דַּבֵּר-נָא, בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם; וּשְׂאֲלוּ
אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ, וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת
רֵעֻתָּהּ, כְּלִי-כֶסֶף, וְכְלִי זָהָב. **2** Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them
ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of
her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

Not only are we to ask of the Egyptians for their booty--enabling them to pay a ransom for the years of slavery [giving them an entrance for teshuva], but also later we are commanded to wear adornments of beauty, the Tefillin:

וְהָיָה לָּךְ לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ,
. וּלְזִכָּרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ **9** And it shall be for a sign to you upon your hand, and
for a memorial between your eyes,

וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְכֶם,
וּלְטוֹטָפֶת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: **16** And it shall be for a sign upon your hand, and for
Tefillin between your eyes;

Our Sages Berakhot 6a say that the verse, "*And all the nations of the earth shall see that the name of Gd is called upon you, and they shall fear you,*" is a reference to tefillin. When the nations see the name of Hashem inscribed on the

tefillin shel rosh, they shall be imbued with fear. Thus, a **Hod**-like enabling will open the gate for others to fear Hashem, and to make them more humble.

Concerning this humility, R. Simon Jacobsen writes:

Hod of Yesod: Humility of Bonding

Humility is crucial in healthy bonding. Arrogance divides people. Preoccupation with your own desires and needs separates you from others. Humility allows you to appreciate another person and bond with him. Healthy bonding is the union of two distinct people, with independent personalities, who join for a higher purpose than satisfying their own needs. True humility comes from recognizing and acknowledging G-d in your life. Am I aware of the third partner - Gd - in bonding? And that this partner gives me the capacity to unite with another, despite our distinctions.

Exercise for the week: When praying acknowledge Gd specifically for helping you bond with others

Tikkun:

יהוה, ישמר-צאתך ובואך-- Hashem shall guard your going out and your coming
מעתה, ועד-עולם in, from this time forth and for ever

As you "come in", this week pause at the Mezuzah and pray to Hashem to help you bond with others. Focus on the Name *Sha-day* related to **Yesod**/bonding. The entrance stands for the Shekhinah, the place of humility. Come up with a strategy to enable others to increase their communication with you.

Week Four: Beshelach-Transmission

Our Torah portion this week features *aggressive* sending out, that of **Netzach**, and *victory* that of **Netzach**, and of an *enduring* commandment to destroy Amalek, that of **Netzach**.

וַיְהִי, בַּשְּׁלַח פְּרֻעָה אֶת-הָעָם,
וְלֹא-נָחֵם אֱלֹהִים דָּרֹךְ אֲרָץ
פְּלִשְׁתִּים, כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא: כִּי
אָמַר אֱלֹהִים, פֶּן-יִנָּחֵם הָעָם
בְּרֹאֲתָם מִלְחָמָה--וַיָּשֻׁבוּ
מִצְרָיִמָּה.

17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh sent the people out, that Gd led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for Gd said: 'Lest the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt

וַיָּשֻׁבוּ הַמַּיִם, וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת-הָרֶכֶב
וְאֶת-הַפָּרָשִׁים, לְכָל חֵיל פְּרֻעָה,
הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּיָּם: לֹא-
נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם, עַד-אֶחָד.

28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them.

וַיֹּאמֶר, כִּי-יָד עַל-כֶּסֶּל יְהוָה,
מִלְחָמָה לִיהוָה, בַּעֲמֻלָּה--
מִדֶּר, דֶּר.

16 And he said: 'The hand upon the throne of Kah,
Hashem have war with Amalek from generation to
generation.

שְׁלִיחַ hints to *shaliah*/messengers, those who transmit messages, who aggressively improve communication between parties, overcoming obstacles in their way. Like the scape-goat sent to Azazel לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ לְעִזָּאזֵל to remove Satan's influence on Yom HaKippurim.

In this portion, many obstacles are overcome with the power of **Netzach**, including:

- the attacking Egyptian army
- the lack of water and food in the desert
- the attack of Amalek, representing doubt

A *shaliah* (Hebrew: שְׁלִיחַ?; pl. שְׁלִיחִים, *sheliḥim*) in Halakha is a Jewish legal emissary or agent. Accordingly, a *shaliah* performs an act of legal significance for the benefit of the sender, as opposed to him or herself. [http://meaningfullife.com/oped/2006/11.17.06\\$Chayei_SarahCOLON_Messenger_or_Matchmaker.php](http://meaningfullife.com/oped/2006/11.17.06$Chayei_SarahCOLON_Messenger_or_Matchmaker.php)

A messenger as the agent of his sender must withstand all sorts of challenges and setbacks to accomplish his mission.

We are all on a mission, on a mission from Gd. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKZSqd5Y8nA>

We are dab smack in the middle of our Shovavim work to improve bonding with our fellow.

Thats our mission.

Is it working? If not, then a **Netzach**/assertive posture needs to be taken.

We need to improve transmission, the quality of our communication. Technology--related to **Netzach**--can help. What with email, voicemail, cell phones, I-touch, skype, texting, we can instantly connect around the world. In second, *mamash!*

How to strengthen the quality of this transmission is the property of **Netzach**.

R. Simon writes:

Netzach of Yesod: Endurance in Bonding

An essential component of bonding is its endurance; its ability to withstand challenges and setbacks. Without endurance there is no chance to develop true bonding. Am I totally committed to the one with whom I bond? How much will

I endure and how ready am I to fight to maintain this bond? Is the person I bond with aware of my devotion?

Exercise for the week: Demonstrate the endurance level of your bonding by confronting a challenge that obstructs the bond.

Tikkun:

What is your own personal mission with communication during Shovavim?

Traditionally we were to work on our improper sexual deeds, words, and thoughts, cleaning up our act, so to say. This is important, undoubtedly, but the thrust of this work is to focus instead on bonding with others, and to improve our transmission. Here are six of the most common mistakes in transmission, as given over by author Loren Ekroth:

1. Blabbermouthing

Talking too much, way out of balance. Going on and on without giving the other(s) their turn. The one who stays on the talk-channel soon frustrates others, and they tune out the blabbermouth. Involved in their own monologues, blabbers feel some satisfaction in carrying on - even when they have lost the involvement of the (former) listener.

Some professionals suffer from the occupational hazard of this mistake - professors, clergy, speakers and trainers, and others who are paid to talk for a living.

2. The "take-away" and "me-too" syndrome

A talker begins a topic and the listener grabs it away and opens a me-centered monologue. You say, "I saw a great movie last weekend . . ." and the listener-soon-to-be talker says, "Oh? I saw one, too . . ." and begins to describe their experience.

The initiator of the movie topic is unable to complete their thought because it's been high-jacked. This is a very childlike and frustrating behavior, and eventually drives people away.

3. Unsolicited advice

Some people are quick to give advice as soon as the other person mentions a problem. "Have you thought of . . . ?" "Why don't you . . . ?" erupt quickly from their overflowing volcanoes of counsel.

Men seem especially prone to this tendency, although women are not immune from it. It is also prevalent among "professional know-it-alls" such as teachers, managers, administrators, and some lawyers, ministers, and counselors.

When offered to friends and other peers, the advice-giver assumes the authority or even parenting role, and that can be off-putting. Better to let the person finish and then, perhaps, to ask "Are you asking for my opinion?" or "What alternatives have you thought of?"

4. Interrupting

This means butting in before your partner has completed the thought. Usually this is done because the interrupting people are impatient and are afraid of not getting their thoughts expressed.

Many of these interruptions occur on TV interviews when the host has guests with opposing views. The guests butt in, over-talk, even shout in order to get in their words. (According to some producers, this makes for exciting television. I think it simply creates an annoyance.)

5. Contradicting

This is the ultimate conversation-blocker. Although great in structured debate, direct disagreement is not helpful in conversation, which is at its best when its mutual and collaborative.

"I disagree with you" or the more gingerly "Yes, BUT." are in plentiful supply in many conversations, and another form of the "I'm right, you're wrong" game. (If chocolate is right, must vanilla be wrong? Or just different?)

The better way is to hear out the point of view being expressed, check that you understand it, then offer "My view is different from yours. Let me explain." People who feel heard and understood are more likely to hear and understand someone expressing a different view.

6. Stingy contributors

This describes the people who listen, take and receive, but don't give.

They contribute little enthusiasm, information, self-disclosure, acknowledgement, compliments or other elements that lift a conversation. They like to "pick the brains" of others, but contribute nothing. They take few risks, and while others share personal experiences, the "stingy contributor" remains cool and contained with personal matters. This cautious, ungenerous style causes an out-of-balance conversation in which real trust can never exist. When you find you are becoming frustrated or annoyed in a conversation, there is a good chance that the other party is exhibiting one of these mistakes. You are experiencing how these mistake patterns cause problems. With your heightened awareness, now work to eliminate them from your own repertoire

Week Five: *Yitro*--Uniting

The Written Torah stands for **Tiferet**, so this week in which we receive the Torah stands perfectly for Tiferet.

Now here is an amazing coincidence:

Two years ago our readers received a weekly column which looked at each Torah portion in terms of its Sefirotic correspondence. Building on the work of my teacher R. David Wolfe-Blank (z'l), we noted that this 17th week since Simchah Torah related to the 17th day of Sefirat HaOmer, or **Tiferet of Tiferet**!

What is more is that the 41st week or **Yesod of Yesod** was Parshat Vetchanan, in which the 10 commandments and the giving of the Torah is again repeated in Sefer Devarim.

So, we can say that the weeks which give over the 10 commandments relate to **Tiferet** and **Yesod**, which is where we are holding presently.

This is the Torah which is **Tiferet**

Our portion's name is "Yitro" which comes from the root "Yeter" or to add

The online dictionary defines the word "**add**" as =To join or **unite** so as to increase in size, quantity, quality, or scope.

To unite. We are stronger together than separate.

For our 5th week we shall focus on uniting together with others for the purposes of bonding, which is our sacred responsibility to our neighbor.

"V'ahavta le-rayacha kamocha. You should love your neighbor as yourself."

How do we understand *love*, how do we understand *neighbor*?

It is best to begin with a story; a two thousand year old story; a story about Hillel, one of the great sages of the Jewish people who was known for his wisdom, for his commitment to study; but, above all, for his patience.

The Talmud relates several stories illustrating the great patience of Hillel. In one of those stories, a Pagan approaches Hillel and tells him that he would like to study, to learn, the entire Torah, all of God's teachings, while standing on one foot.

Others just cast this person aside. "You can't be serious, you're mocking me, you can't study God's infinite wisdom, His Torah, His teaching, while standing on one foot."

But Hillel welcomed the Pagan and said, "Fine. Stand on one foot, and I'll teach

you the entire Torah.” And he told him in his native Aramaic, “*Ma da’alach sanei, lechavrach lo sa’aveid*. That which is hateful to you do not do unto your neighbor.”

This was Hillel’s understanding of the Biblical “*Love your neighbor as yourself*”. “What is hateful to you do not do unto your neighbor.”

But Hillel continued and said, “That’s the entire Torah. That’s all of Gd’s teachings. The rest is commentary.”

And finally, he said, “Go out and study the commentary.”

The Jewish people, for two thousand years since Hillel, have studied that commentary.

Judaism stresses the need to study lifelong study: “*Ki hem chayenu v’orech yameinu*. Study is our life, the length of our days.”

What have the Jewish people, learned about this commentary, a commentary on “What is hateful to you do not do unto your neighbor”?

First of all, we have learned who is our neighbor.

Our neighbor is not merely the person who lives next door to us or across the street or even down the lane. Our neighbor may be very distant from us.

Distant geographically. Our neighbor may be a victim of a tsunami halfway across the world. Our neighbors may be the suffering people of Darfur. Our neighbors may be those that are victims of the cruel wars, so far away geographically. As distant as they are, they are our neighbors.

Our neighbors may be distant from us culturally.

They may be different from us ideologically.

They may be different from us in their color, in their race, in their language, in their behavior, in their dress, but they – each and every one of them is our neighbor.

”What is hateful to yourself,” again, the words of Hillel, “do not do unto your neighbor.”

What does it mean to *love your neighbor*? The rabbinic commentaries struggle with this. Love? Love is a very precious commodity. It’s been cheapened, perhaps, in literature, in the cinema. But love is the highest of all emotions. Can you expect us to love each and every other neighbor that we have?

Our rabbis teach us to love means to feed and to clothe the poor. Behavior, action, is what counts.

Sometimes our neighbor is poor, and then we must feed and clothe him.

Sometimes our neighbor, she is ill, and then we must cure her and heal her.

Sometimes our neighbor, he is bereaved, and he requires us to console and to comfort him.

And sometimes our neighbor has been traumatized, and then we must render her whole.

Sometimes our neighbors are victims of human violence. And then we, all of us, must unite to do what we can, to transform our culture, to surgically remove from it the violence that permeates our society, that permeates our media, that permeates our literature. We must excise that violence, and we must fashion a culture which is defined by loving kindness and by compassion.

Our neighbor may be unemployed, or she may be unfairly employed, and then we must find her employment or create meaningful employment for her, and we must redress the inequities of the workplace.

And sometimes, our neighbor is ignorant, and then we must educate him or her.

We must educate those who are challenged by poverty, by cultural deprivation, by disability, by illness, by prejudice, by intolerance, by learning difficulties, and by emotional hindrances - we must educate all those who are challenged, whatever they are challenged by.

And we must allow, especially in this pluralistic, diverse, and multicultural society, we must allow for freedom of choice in education so that our neighbor can instill in her children the values of her faith, the language of her people, the culture of her ancestors, the traditions of her family, while not blocking their path to full participation in the society at large.

And sometimes our neighbor is of a different religious faith entirely, and then we, of other faiths, must work together to assure him the ability to worship as he chooses and to conduct his life in accordance with the precepts and customs of his religion in the workplace, in the public space, without shame and without hardship.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, once the Chief Rabbi in the land of Israel. And he wrote: "*Tzadikim gemurim einam kovlim al horah elah mosifim ohr*. The truly righteous do not bemoan ignorance; but they spread knowledge and wisdom." They are not crippled by doubt or despair, but they inspire faith and encourage hope. And they are not defeated by darkness nor ugliness or evil, for they shed light, they spread beauty, and they promote and foster all that is good.

R. Simon Jacobsen reiterates this sense of compassion:

Tiferet of Yesod: Compassion in Bonding

Bonding needs to be not only loving but also compassionate, feeling your friend's pain and empathizing with him. Is my bonding conditional? Do I withdraw when I am uncomfortable with my friend's troubles?

Exercise for the week: Offer help and support in dealing with an ordeal of someone with whom you have bonded.

Tikkun:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axb2sHpGwHQ>

Come together.

We talked about the verb "come" and its connotations on Week Three, which stood for **Hod**.

Hod and **Tiferet** can both be translated as "beauty" and "majesty", although the former is more of a "passive" sense while the latter is balanced and harmonious in giving and receiving, uniting both right and left together as one.

That is what we need to do with our communication to unite.

We need to listen. We need to respond appropriately from a deep place.

Unity depends on sharing, without thought of winning.

As we try to bond compassionately, we should focus on our balanced communication.

This unity will only add--like Yitro added to Moshe with his sound advice on balanced judging--to the beauty of your communication and bonding with others.

Week Six: Mishpatim--Civil Interactions

This is the last week of Shovavim, our last week in which we can sweeten judgments concerning our blemishes in communication.

No coincidence that our shita/method here takes us to **Gevurah** of **Yesod**, **Gevurah** meaning strength and hinting to severity and judgments. No coincidence either that our Torah portion is called Mishpatim, which means judgments.

These are the laws that regulate our behavior, laws that set boundaries in Gevurah fashion on our actions.

Rabbi Shimon in the Zohar Mishpatim cuts to the chase:

פֶּתַח ר' שִׁמְעוֹן וְאָמַר, (שְׁמוֹת כ"א) וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיִם לִפְנֵיהֶם, תְּרִגּוּם, וְאֵלֶּיךָ דִּינֵיָא דְתַסְדֵּר קְדָמִיהוֹן. אֵלֶּיךָ אֵינוֹן סְדוּרִין דְּגִלְגּוּלָא, דִּינֵיךָ דְנִשְׁמָתִין, דְּאִתְדָּנוּ כָּל חַד וְחַד לְקַבֵּל עוֹנְשֵׁיהָ.

Rabbi Shimon opened with the words, "*And these are the judgments which you shall set before them*" (*Shemot 21:1*). These are the rules concerning reincarnation, the judgments of souls that are to be sentenced each according to its punishable acts

The whole system of reincarnation may seem **Gevurah**-like, but it is really a tremendous kindness of Hashem, giving us many chances to get it right!

After this portion, the whole nature of the Torah changes. All narratives now are infused with laws regulating a person's conduct, both criminally and civilly. This portion is a virtual garden of mitzvot: 53 [gematria Gan/garden] appear.

There are several mitzvot which are traditional Shovavim-type laws, for example:

15 And if a man **entice a virgin** that is not betrothed, **and lie with her**, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife
 וְכִי-יִפְתֶּה אִישׁ, בְּתוּלָה אִשָּׁר לֹא-אֵרְשָׁהּ--וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִמָּהּ: מָהָר יִמְהַרְנָה לוֹ, לְאִשָּׁה.

10 If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, **and her conjugal rights**, shall he not diminish
 אִם-אֶחָדָהּ, יִקַּח-לוֹ--שְׂאֵרָה בְּסוּתָהּ וְעִנְתָּהּ, לֹא יִגְרַע.

18 Whosoever **lies with a beast** shall surely be put to death.
 כָּל-שֹׁכֵב עִם-בְּהֵמָה, מוֹת יוּמָת.

It's all about regulating civil society, how to get along with another.

These include the laws of the indentured servant; the penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault, and theft; civil laws pertaining to redress of damages, the granting of loans, and the responsibilities of the "Four Guardians"; and the rules governing the conduct of justice by courts of law. Also included are laws warning against mistreatment of foreigners; the observance of the seasonal festivals, and the agricultural gifts that are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem; mitzvah of prayer; and the prohibition against cooking meat with milk.

The latter mitzvah relates to **Gevurah**, for together with its Rabbinical extensions, is so important that it constitutes the heart of the standard curriculum for modern-day Rabbinical ordination.

The prohibition applies to the milk and **meat** of any permitted animal. However, one message of the mitzva has its roots in the original wording: not to cook a calf (the young of the species - PC) in its own mother's milk.

Rabbi Asher Meir notes that there is an obvious incongruence in this practice. The milk was produced by the mother in order to give life to the kid, and now we seethe the calf in this same milk after its death. The milk produced by the mother to nourish her offspring is now feeding the very one who slaughtered that offspring! It is as if we were seeking to nurse and nourish the forces of death and cruelty (the slaughtered calf and the human who took it from its mother), instead of life and loving kindness! (Based on Zohar Mishpatim.)

There is a related negative symbolism in consuming any milk with any meat - which is also forbidden by the Torah. Eating animals can naturally symbolize assimilating their bestial qualities, as indeed it does in many pagan cultures; and the laws of kosher meat are fraught with the symbolism of overcoming these base qualities. We only eat docile ruminants; we don't hack or hunt them but rather slaughter them in a rapid and humane way; we salt the meat to get rid of the blood, which more than anything else symbolizes the animal's lower, bestial nature. And while meat may be eaten uncooked, the gemara indicates that meat is best eaten well cooked - to overcome its natural toughness (Shabbat 42b).

Conversely, there are also "neutral" foods, like uncultivated vegetables, which are generally not subject to any halakhic restrictions. (Except in the shemitta year in Israel.)

Milk occupies a unique intermediate status. According to Jewish tradition, the milk is formed from the blood - the ultimate embodiment of bestiality. However, once it turns to milk, it is permissible without any further preparation. Apparently the negative symbolism of the blood has been fully overcome! Just as the milk has physically escaped from the beast's flesh and blood and collected separately in the udder, so has it escaped the stigma of bestiality.

(We find a similar intermediate status in secular culture. Many people are vegetarians - they put milk in the same category as vegetables. A few are vegans - they view milk as an animal product no different from meat.)

Nonetheless, the milk remains an animal food. After all, it must come from a permitted animal. This suggests that there is still a latent blood-like potential in the milk, which can be dangerously reawakened by bringing it back into contact with the meat.

The parallel symbolism applies in the opposite direction. By slaughtering and salting the meat, we have worked hard to subdue the negative qualities meat signifies. Bringing it back into contact with milk, which comes from the **blood**, is like reawakening the latent **bloodthirsty** quality of the beast. This is particularly true if we cook the meat together with the milk. The same process which is meant to complete the "taming" of the meat is now a conspirator in its regression. (Based on Likutei Halakhot, Breslav.)

Milk and meat just can't get along together (!), but we can, and must. Last week we contemplated on how to love our neighbor as ourself. This week we should think about healthy boundaries, like those designed by Hashem in Parshat

Mishpatim. Healthy communication does require some discipline for it to work well with both parties.

R. Simon writes:

Gevurah of Yesod: Discipline of Bonding

Bonding must be done with discretion and careful consideration with whom and with what you bond. Even the healthiest and closest bonding needs "time out", a respect for each individual's space. Do I overbond? Am I too dependent on the one I bond with? Is he too dependent on me? Do I bond out of desperation? Do I bond with healthy, wholesome people?

Exercise for the week: Review the discipline in your bonding experiences to see if it needs adjustment.

Tikkun:

Abraham - Avraham Avinu - is described as *Avram Ha'Ivri*, Abram the Boundary Crosser from the root verb *ayin-vet-resh*, to cross or pass over or through. As well as his physical journey across the fertile crescent from Ur of the Chaldees - with a lengthy stop in Haran - to the Land of Caanan, Abram had crossed over a spiritual boundary from the pagan polytheistic world to the singular world-view of monotheism: the worship of the One True G-d.

But this boundary crossing stops when we deal with mitzvot and civil laws!

יז אָרױר, מָסִיג גְּבוּל רֵעֵהוּ; 17 Cursed be he that removes his neighbor's
וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם, אָמֵן. boundary. And all the people shall say: Amen

We need to stop and examine how our communication is working with the ones we care about. Mishpatim is about judgment, line drawing, yes and no, white and black, right and wrong.

For the past 5 weeks we've worked through many facets of the way we relate with others.

Rather than be a boundary crosser in the sense of Avraham, this week act like he did in **Gevurah** fashion at the Akeidah, by following rules of respect for other's [The Other] wishes even when they might not be your own.

[See Shem Mi Shmuel's comment on the destruction of Sodom at the time of Avraham. Logically, this destruction should have occurred at the time of Yitzchak whose merit is that of **Din**, However, it was necessary to teach that even **Chesed** sometimes needs to be limited by **Din**, and therefore Sodom was to be destroyed rather in the days of Avraham whose merit is **Chesed**. In the same way, the **Din** and Judgement of Yitzchak needed to be tempered and limited by the **Chesed** of Rivkah, as Hashem merged **Din** and **Chesed** when He created the World]

Afterward

We've done it!

We've sweetened 6 facets of our communication:

- relationships
- revelations of secrets
- entrances
- transmission
- uniting
- civil interaction

Now it's time to build, as we do in Parshat Terumah, a place in our heart for the Shekhinah to dwell.

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי, מִקֹּדֶשׁ; וְשִׁכְנֹתִי, בְּתוֹכָם. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them

הָקֵד יְבִנָּה, עוֹלָם, The world is built on *Chesed*/lovingkindness, and the voluntary giving in Parshat Terumah is emblematic of this love.

Let's conclude with the advice from R. Simon:

Chesed of Yesod: Lovingkindness of Bonding

Love is the heart of bonding. You cannot bond without love. Love establishes a reliable base on which bonding can build. If you have a problem bonding, examine how much you love the one (or the experience) with which you wish to bond. Do I try to bond without first fostering a loving attitude? Is my bonding expressed in a loving manner?

Exercise for the future: Demonstrate the bond you have with your child or friend through an act of love