

LESSON 3.1.1 – *Middah #3* – order / *seder* / סדר

READING: *Everyday Holiness*, Chapter 11: order / *seder*

PRACTICE: continue with your phrase, journaling and *kabbalat* for patience.

PHRASE:

- *Every person has his hour, and everything its place.*
- רצונו עשה כרצונך – *Oseh Ritzono kirtzonecha* – Make God's Will your will (Pirkei Avot 2:4)

Welcome

We now begin to prepare for delving into the next soul-trait we will study and practice, which is **order**, or **seder** in Hebrew. Your reading is chapter 11 in *Everyday Holiness*, which is the one on “order,” of course.

A. READING: Please complete reading Chapter 11 of *Everyday Holiness* (Order) before your group meets again.

We have been reminding you that when reading a Mussar text, you should do three things:

- Read the chapter as slowly and as many times as it takes for you to gain a good understanding of the concepts presented there.
- Give some time to considering how the concepts in the chapter apply to you personally, your life and the people you know.
- Make note of any questions or uncertainties so you can bring them to your next *va'ad* (small group) meeting.

Please fix these three ideas in your mind as we won't be repeating this reminder after this session.

For every chapter of the book, we will provide some prompt questions that will help you probe and penetrate the text, in order to come away with more comprehension and more retained learning.

Here are the things we call to your attention as you read the chapter on order in *Everyday Holiness* to help you probe and penetrate the text. Please bring any

questions or issues that arise from the reading to be discussed in the *va'ad* meeting.

1. The Alter of Kelm, Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv (1824–1898) was one of the early leaders of the Mussar Movement in Lithuania. The motto by which he lived and taught is quoted at the head of the chapter: “Take time, be exact, unclutter the mind.”

What role do you think those three qualities have to play in regard to the *middah* of order?

2. In reflection on the opening statement in the chapter that “order is all about the middle way” can you think of situations (or even people) that have been negatively impacted by chaos, on the one hand, or by rigidity and inflexibility on the other?

3. Do you think that Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler has hit upon the main benefits of order in the three he explains?:

- a. providing a sense of control
- b. helping you find what you need
- c. creating the circumstances for proper functioning

4. The chapter points out how important order is to Jewish thought and practice because “only one moment separates Shabbat from the weekday. One hairbreadth is the difference between a kosher and an unfit slaughtering. A small volume of water can render a kosher *mikvah* unfit. Details are small but they matter, often crucially.” Consider this notion in relation to your own life. Where do small details being in order or out of order make a huge difference?

5. What’s the connection between being a “servant of God” (the Jewish ideal exemplified by Moses) and the *middah* of *seder* [order]? What does it mean to you to think of “an alignment of your will with the divine will.” Don’t just read through but stop to contemplate such ideas.

6. How does the story of the Tower of Babel teach us a lesson about order?

7. How would cultivating humility have an impact on how a person brings order into their life?

8. What is the necklace for which *seder* is the clasp? Why is order so significant in the overall scheme of spiritual character development that is Mussar?

B. PRACTICE: You are to continue with your practice focused on patience right up until your *va'ad* meets on the theme of order. As soon as that *va'ad* meeting on order is complete, you will be given your assignment for self-study and practice on order, and that is when you will switch to the phrase, journaling and *kabbalah* for order.

But for now, continue with your practice focused on patience. That includes journaling every evening on patience as it shows up in your day.

One of the best things to journal is the experience you have in doing your *kabbalah* that day. Your daily exercise is to be based on where you identify yourself as sitting on the continuum between procrastination or inaction and outright impatience. A reminder (in summary; more details on these exercises are given in the instructions for last session):

a. *kabbalot* for procrastination

Prepare in advance a planned substitute that you will call on instead of procrastinating or being inactive in your daily life.

b. *kabbalot* for impatience

Choose 15 minutes of your day when you engage with others during which you will practice “bearing the burden” of everything you hear and experience that you don’t like or even find offensive.

c. *kabbalot* for the patient person who also has alacrity

Challenge yourself by giving yourself a *kabbalah* that stretches you. If you feel you are generally patient, your *kabbalah* could be to challenge yourself to be cheerful when forced to wait.

Alternatively, if you tend to take action in a timely way, challenge yourself to hold back to see if anyone else in your environment will take action. Maybe your alacrity is causing you to take up too much space.

You can also think about and come up with a *kabbalah* that works particularly well for you.

C. Outline for *Va'ad* meeting on Order:

In preparation for your upcoming *va'ad* meeting, we remind you of the format that this meeting will take, as for all *va'ad* meetings:

1. Invocation
2. Check-in
3. Review of previous practice
4. Review of the reading
5. Taking it to heart
6. Your take-away
7. Closing

Please complete your reading on order in *Everyday Holiness* as soon as possible and certainly before your *va'ad* meets, when it will be discussed in depth.