

LESSON 2.1.2 – *Middah #2* – patience / *savlanut* / סבלנות

READING: *Everyday Holiness*, Chapter 8: Patience / *savlanut*

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

PHRASE: “No more than my space, no less than my place”

Welcome

We now begin to prepare for delving into the next soul-trait we will study and practice, which is **patience**, or ***savlanut*** in Hebrew. Your reading is chapter 8 in *Everyday Holiness*, which is the one on patience, of course.

A. READING: Please complete reading Chapter 8 of *Everyday Holiness* (Patience) before your group meets again.

We remind 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.

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

Here are the things we call to your attention as you read the chapter on patience in *Everyday Holiness*:

1. There is confusion about the meaning of patience. Some people think it means being completely unruffled despite being delayed or frustrated by the situation or other people. There are others who think patience means being forbearing when annoyed. What do you learn from exploring the Hebrew term for patience (*savlanut*) and other words in Hebrew that share the same linguistic root?

2. How does it help us to cultivate patience to understand that, in Jewish terms, the ultimate blueprint for spiritual life is to walk in God's ways? In what way does God express the *middah* of patience? How does this relate to your own experience? Where could you bring into your life the sort of patience the rabbis tell us that God exhibits?

3. How is patience related to humility?

4. In the chapter, you read the story of Rav Preida. Consider your own response to this story. Is this a level of patience that is conceivable for you? Does it motivate you to take to heart the rewards Rav Preida earns?

5. The practice of Mussar depends on sharpening your awareness. Where does being aware show up in the reading? How would being more aware help you keep the match from the fuse, in the language of the chapter?

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

But for now, continue with your practice focused on humility. That includes journaling every evening on humility 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 arrogance and self-debasement. A reminder:

a. *kabbalot* for arrogance

Choose one or more of the following suggestions as things you will do every day, as often as circumstances arise:

- Sit at the back of the room, not the front.
- Wear unremarkable clothing that does not attract attention.
- Speak softly.
- Wait for others to speak before you do.

b. *kabbalot* for self-debasement

Choose one or more of the following suggestions as things you will do every day, as often as circumstances arise:

- Sit at the front of the room, not the back.

- Wear more dramatic clothing that does not shy away from attracting attention.
 - Speak loudly and with conviction.
 - Look for opportunities to be the first one to raise your hand or speak.
- c. *kabbalat* for humble people with self-esteem
- Sit, speak and conduct yourself in ways that are not instinctive to you. Try a stretch to be more prominent in your space and also something that stretches you to be less prominent. Observe what you can learn from your experience, what the Mussar teachers call *hitlamdut*, teaching yourself.

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

In preparation for your upcoming *va'ad* meeting, we remind you of the format that this meeting will take, which will be the same 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 patience in *Everyday Holiness* as soon as possible and certainly before your *va'ad* meets, when it will be discussed in depth.