

Dvar Torah Outline — Sefirat HaOmer: Hod, Hidden Salvation, Hoda'ah, Refuah, and the Maharal's "7 Directions" Model

Abstract

This dvar Torah uses the Maharal (in the third introduction to *Gevurot Hashem*) to frame the seven weeks of Sefirat HaOmer as a progression through seven divine מידות, anchored in a sugya in Berachot that maps them onto the pasuk "לך ה' הגדולה" (צפון). The focus is on מידת ההוד: its connection to hiddenness (צפון), to הודאה/תודה as "admitting" what could have been denied, and to healing as restoring balance. Through the episode of נחלי ארנון and the role of אהרן הכהן, the talk develops Hod as the capacity to reveal and acknowledge inner truth—whether in Hashem's hidden salvations or in the hidden goodness within people.

I. Framing the discussion: Sefirat HaOmer and the seven מידות

A. The practical question: why is Kabbalah printed in every siddur here?

- Observation: even simple siddurim print the daily "this day is X sheb'Y" mapping of the days of the Omer to ספירות.
- Thesis (in the name of "Abba"): during this time, every Jew should have *some* connection to what is happening spiritually—each at their level.

B. The textual anchor: the Gemara in Berachot

- Source: **Berachot 58a**.
- The pasuk the Gemara expounds (said when taking out the Sefer Torah):
 - "לך ה' הגדלה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד כי כל בשמים ובארץ לך ה' הממלכה והמתנשא לכל לראש."
 - (*"Yours, Hashem, are the greatness, the might, the splendor, the eternity, and the glory—for all that is in heaven and on earth is Yours; Yours, Hashem, is the kingdom, and You are exalted over all as the Head."*)
- Claim: the Gemara is "walking through" the seven מידות/ספירות; Sefirat HaOmer's seven weeks parallel them.

II. Today's focus: Hod (הוד) — because of the coming week and ל"ג בעומר

A. Why Hod now?

- The week of הוד is upcoming.
- ל"ג בעומר occurs within הוד, and the speaker notes a likely connection to:
 - the tradition that רבי תלמידי רבי עקיבא stopped dying on ל"ג בעומר.

B. The Gemara's identification for Hod (mainly via רבי שילא)

- The Gemara ties each מידה to a גילוי in Jewish history.
- For Hod:
 - “וְהָהוּד זֶה מִלְחַמַּת נַחֲלֵי אֶרְנוֹן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל כֵּן יֵאמָר בְּסֵפֶר מִלְחַמַּת ה' אֶת וְהָב בְּסוּפָהּ וְאֶת הַנַּחֲלִים אֶרְנוֹן.”
(“And ‘the Hod’—this is the war of the streams of Arnon, as it says: ‘Therefore it will be said in the Book of the Wars of Hashem: Vahev in Sufah, and the streams of Arnon.’”)

III. The story of נַחֲלֵי אֶרְנוֹן: hidden salvation that becomes visible

A. The ambush that Israel never saw

- A narrow passage; Amorites hide in caves above, planning an ambush.
- Hashem causes a mountain to press into the opposite mountain:
 - protrusions enter caves and kill the ambushers.
- Then the mountains separate again so Israel can pass—unaware anything happened.

B. Why Hashem “reveals” it afterward

- Hashem doesn't want the salvation to remain entirely unknown.
- A stream/flow exposes evidence (blood/signs) so Israel realizes what occurred.

C. The response: הודאה as recognition

- This revelation produces הודאה—Israel becomes מודה once the hidden is revealed.
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IV. Defining Hod: להודות = הוד (to admit) and תודה (to thank)

A. “Admitting” implies something deniable

- To admit means:
 - initially there was denial / lack of clarity,
 - afterward one acknowledges what is true.

B. Why תודה is a form of הודאה

- Thanking someone = admitting something you “hold” came from them.
- Example framework:
 - If something is clearly yours, “admitting it’s yours” is meaningless.
 - If you gave it to me and now it’s in my possession, the origin is *concealable*—so gratitude is an admission of source.

C. Hod as “restoring balance” in relationships

- Without acknowledgment, the world is “out of whack”:
 - the giver’s role is erased,
 - the recipient acts as if the good is entirely “mine.”
- .restores the correct relational balance תודה/הודאה

D. Key condition: awareness

- A person can only give תודה if they *realize* they received.
 - Thus, in נחלי ארנון:
 - the gift (safety) existed,
 - but the awareness needed for Hod was missing until Hashem revealed it.
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V. From Hod to Refuah: healing as restoring homeostasis

A. A “hashgachah pratit” link: מכת שחין from Hod

- The speaker reports learning in a קדמון source:
 - הוד מידה came via the שחין.

- Idea:
 - Hod is a channel intended for טוב/רפואה.
 - Egypt “perverted the channels,” so the very pathway becomes a כלי for punishment.

B. Why Hod is associated with רפואה

1. From אהרן הכהן

- Healing/צרעת processes revolve around the כהן (seen as rooted in אהרן).
- Bringing a מצורע to a כהן and the כהן's “seeing” is described as effecting restoration.

2. Kohanim as Hod

- The כהנים are identified with הוד והדר—beauty/grace/splendor (and more).

C. Conceptual explanation: illness = imbalance; healing = restored balance

- Disease is described as loss of equilibrium (homeostasis): too much/too little heat, pressure, fluid, etc.
- Healing is the reestablishment of balance—parallel to Hod's role in restoring the “missing side” into recognition.
- Illustrative example: tensions between heart management and kidney management (competing needs) highlight the complexity of restoring balance.

D. Hod after Netzach: repairing what victory can break

- If נצח is “battle/overcoming,” then:
 - after ניצחון, relationships can be damaged.
- Hod comes after:
 - to heal, acknowledge, and reconnect.

VI. Hod as recognizing the hidden good in people: as model אהרן הכהן

A. אהרן as “ohev shalom v'rodef shalom”

- אהרן “sees” value even when it is not obvious
- Hod is:
 - acknowledging inner worth,
 - restoring someone to wholeness (especially relevant in צרעת contexts).

B. Practical application

- Hod trains a person not to deny what is easy to deny in another:
 - a spark of truth,
 - a meaningful contribution,
 - latent goodness that requires depth to uncover.
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VII. Hod = hiddenness (צפון): the Maharal's spatial model of the seven מידות

A. Maharal's move: explain the system, not just name it

- The Maharal ties the seven מידות to the structure of the world.

B. Three dimensions → six directions → plus a center

- A three-dimensional world has three axes.
- Each axis has two directions → total **six directions**:
 - right/left, up/down, forward/back.
- Plus the **נקודה אמצעית** (the center) → a “seventh” (linked conceptually to שבת).

C. Mapping Hod to the north: הוד = צפון

- Hod aligns with **צפון** because צפון means hidden.
- Example: **צפון** in the Pesach seder—hiding the afikoman (hiddenness theme).

D. Why the north is “hidden”

- In the northern hemisphere framework used by Chazal:
 - the sun is primarily in the southern sky;
 - the north is associated with concealment (hidden light).
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VIII. Splendor as revelation of the inner: Hod beyond “hidden”

A. Multiple meanings that converge

- Hod can mean “splendor/beauty,” but specifically:
 - a radiance that reveals what was inside and deniable.

B. Moshe's radiance as Hod (Rav Tzadok)

- The הוד on Moshe's face after receiving Torah the second time:
 - a גילוי that forces recognition.
- Core idea:
 - normally the נשמה is not empirically “provable” and can be denied;
 - radiance is a manifestation that makes the hidden undeniable.

C. Hod as both divine and human

- It is:
 - how Hashem acts (revealing hidden good/salvation),
 - and how we should act (acknowledging hidden good in Hashem's gifts and in others).
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IX. Maharal's language: hidden deeds and the need for הודאה

A. “Hidden actions” in the world

- Maharal's phrasing (as summarized): from the side of Hod come מעשים נסתרים—hidden divine actions people usually don't know.

B. “צא ולמד”: Lavan as a paradigm for unseen salvations

- The Haggadah phrase is used to teach:
 - if Hashem sometimes lets us see what was prevented (as with Lavan admitting Hashem warned him),
 - then we should extrapolate to the many cases we never discover.

C. Modern analogy

- Example offered: discovering after the fact that a coordinated attack failed due to unexpected disunity—an instance of “revealed hidden salvation” prompting הודאה.
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X. Sukkot as the festival of Hod (Maharal's program)

A. Why Sukkot is linked to Hod

- Sukkot is framed as the primary זמן of gratitude:
 - harvest abundance,
 - and/or the post-Yom Kippur state of kapparah.

B. The risk that triggers Hod: “my harvest, my success”

- The more a person “has,” the more plausible the denial of Source.
- Therefore Sukkot demands הודאה to restore truth.

C. Liturgical marker: full Hallel each day

- Sukkot is distinguished by saying הלל each day (unlike Pesach's half-Hallel on later days).
- This is presented as evidence that Sukkot is the הג of הוד.

XI. A final ethical/theological clarification: what are we emulating?

A. What aspect of Hashem is “Hod” tapping into?

- Hashem uses Hod to:
 - reveal hidden salvations,
 - acknowledge the inner/hidden side of reality,
 - relate to what could otherwise be denied.

B. What we emulate

- To engage Hod is:
 - not to deny what is easy to deny,
 - to be מודה and give תודה,
 - to seek and validate inner goodness in others and bring it to light.

C. Rav Tzadok add-on: Moshe (נצח) vs. Hod in outreach to nations

- The idea is raised:
 - translating Torah to 70 languages could have been “for the nations,”

- but Moshe's mode (נצח) leaves truth available without actively bringing it to them,
 - whereas Hod would be the impulse to *go toward* the other and be מקרב—"to see the other as meaningful."
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XII. Summary (key takeaways)

- Hod is the מידה of הודאה/תודה: admitting what could have been denied and restoring proper balance.
- exemplifies Hod: hidden salvation becomes revealed so Israel can acknowledge נחלי ארנון Hashem.
- Hod connects to רפואה because healing is the restoration of balance (homeostasis), modeled by אהרן הכהן's capacity to see hidden good and restore people's.
- In the Maharal's model, Hod corresponds to צפון—hiddenness—where concealed divine actions originate and later may be revealed to generate הודאה.
- Sukkot is a primary "Hod season": abundance creates the risk of denial, and full daily Hallel embodies the response of תודה.