

Dvar Torah Outline — Sefirat HaOmer Middot: Yesod, “Ki Kol BaShamayim U’VaAretz,” Milchamet Sisera, Yosef HaTzaddik, and the Olive (Zayit Shemen)

Abstract

This dvar Torah continues a series mapping the sefirot/middot through a Gemara in Berachot, focusing on **יסוד** as the “hidden” middah embedded in the phrase “**כִּי כֹל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ**”. It develops Yesod as the power of **hashpa’ah and kabbalah** (influence and receptivity), the discipline of **discernment** (channeling energy only where it belongs), and the stance of **faithfulness to one’s source**—modeled by Yosef. The outline ties these themes to **Milchemet Sisera** (where the heavens and earth interact), to the Yamim Nora’im as “shamayim/aretz,” and to **Tu BiShvat** via the **olive/oil** as the seventh-species symbol of Yesod.

I. The Gemara’s Yesod: present but not explicit

A. The pasuk sequence and the “missing” word

- The verse under discussion continues:
 - “**לְךָ ה' הַגְדָּלָה וְהַגְבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאָרֶת וְהַנִּצָּח וְהַהוֹד כִּי כֹל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ**”
(*“Yours, Hashem, are the greatness, the might, the splendor, the triumph, and the glory—for all that is in heaven and earth is Yours.”*)
 - Observation:
 - The word **יסוד** does not appear explicitly.
 - Yet the Gemara identifies “**כִּי כֹל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ**” as corresponding to **Yesod**.
 - Suggestion:
 - The *hiddenness* of Yesod in the text may itself reflect something essential about Yesod: it operates as a channel/foundation rather than a “named” expression.
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II. Gemara Berachot 58: “Ki Kol BaShamayim U’VaAretz” = Milchemet Sisera

A. The Gemara’s link

- The Gemara says:
 - “כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ — זֶה מִלְחַמַּת סִיסְרָא”
(“For all that is in heaven and earth—this refers to the war of Sisera.”)
- Proof-text from Shoftim:
 - “מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ הַכּוֹכָבִים מִמַּסְלֹתֵם נִלְחָמוּ עִם סִיסְרָא”
(“From heaven the stars fought; from their courses they fought against Sisera.”)

B. Peshat of the connection: interaction of “shamayim” and “aretz”

- Usually שָׁמַיִם is “hands-off,” distant.
- In Sisera’s war:
 - The “heavens” actively intervene in an “earthly” battle.
 - This matches the pasuk’s language of שָׁמַיִם/אָרֶץ as a single interacting system.

C. Sisera’s iron chariots and the drama of the battle (as described)

- Sisera as an overwhelming military force:
 - **900 iron chariots** (not incidental; the number becomes symbolic later).
- Battle imagery:
 - A “heavenly bombardment” heats/destroys the chariots.
 - The enemy’s defeat includes the element of water washing them away—another “shamayim/aretz” dynamic.

III. Yesod as “sod”: why these ideas can’t be said straight

A. “Sod” is not “classified”—it’s beyond language

- These are called matters of סוד not because they’re forbidden to share, but because:
 - They are too lofty to be fully “brought down” into precise words.
- Therefore the method is:
 - Approaching the middah from multiple angles (person, event, direction, symbol), hoping a picture emerges.

IV. Sisera as Yesod of tum'ah: כוח ההשפעה in its corrupted form

A. Sisera as an extreme “משפיע”

- Described as extraordinarily powerful and dominating:
 - By age 30 he “conquered the world” (midrashic portrayal).
 - No city could withstand him.
 - Even animals obey his command (depiction of overpowering influence).
- Core framing:
 - Sisera embodies Yesod מצד הרע: unrestrained כוח ההשפעה.

B. The significance of “900”

- The number 9 points to Yesod when counting the full stack including:
 - כתר, חכמה, בינה + the seven lower middot.
- Thus:
 - 900 hints to Sisera as the amplified כוח of Yesod (in distortion).

V. Yael as the counterforce: overcoming corrupted Yesod through “לשם שמים”

A. The non-PG Gemara (Yevamot) and the paradox it creates

- The narrative contains two seemingly contradictory teachings:
 - One statement: Sisera was with her multiple times.
 - Another statement: “he never touched her.”
- Proposed reconciliation:
 - אלו ואלו דברי אלוהים חיים: both can be true on different levels.

B. Rav Tzadok: Yesod exists in both male and female

- Yesod in the male:
 - The כוח to be משפיע (to transmit).
- Yesod in the female:
 - The כוח to be מקבל (to receive).

- Both require discernment:
 - Not every “influence” should be given.
 - Not every “influence” should be received.

C. The pleasure-point and why Yesod is uniquely dangerous

- The מקום התענוג sits in Yesod:
 - For a man: pleasure in being משפיע.
 - For a woman: pleasure in being מקבל.
- Therefore the יצר הרע targets Yesod:
 - For the male: misdirected “hashpa'ah,” including the extreme of שכבת זרע לבטלה as פגם היסוד.
 - For the female: receiving from an inappropriate משפיע.

D. Yael's spiritual victory: receiving without being “impacted”

- The פנימיות reading:
 - Even where the act occurred externally, internally she was not “מקבל ממנו.”
- How?
 - עבירה לשמה and אסתר לשם שמים—like the paradigm of לשם שמים:
 - action done solely as a channel for a higher purpose, not personal absorption.

VI. “כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ”: Yesod as the channel from above to below

A. Shamayim = mashpia; Aretz = mekabelet

- שמים is framed as “male”—it gives (rain, influence).
- ארץ is framed as “female”—it receives and produces.

B. “Kol” as a code-word for Yesod

- כֹּל signals the gathering of all powers into one channel.
- Conceptual model:
 - The seed/emanation is not “one middah”; it is a **condensed totality** of the person.

C. “Kol” = 50: all the powers condensed

- כ”ל is **gematria 50**.
- Idea:
 - The five “expressive” middot (חֶסֶד–הוּד) are not replaced by Yesod;

- Yesod is the **bringing-out** of them into transmission—the “DNA-like” concentrated expression.
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VII. Yesod as “foundation”: faithfulness, support, and not hijacking the flow

A. A key definition: “לית ביה מגרמיה כלום”

- Yesod has no “content of its own” the way other middot do.
- It is a **conduit**: it transmits the person's powers outward.

B. Yosef as the archetype of Yesod (male lens)

- Textual equation:
 - Yosef is called **יוסף הצדיק**
 - And the verse says: “**צִדִּיק יְסוֹד עוֹלָם**” (“A righteous one is the foundation of the world.”)
 - Therefore Yosef embodies Yesod.

C. Yosef's **תיקון**: guarding the channel (שמירת הברית)

- Yosef resists the ultimate Yesod test:
 - the wrong “receiver” (אשת פוטיפר) despite the pull of pleasure.
- He becomes the one who can sustain and transmit life properly:
 - “**הַמְשִׁבִּיר לְכָל הָאָרֶץ**” (“the provider to all the land.”)

D. Yosef and Egypt: fixing “ערות הארץ” through ברית מילה

- Egypt is portrayed as a **מקום זימה**—misuse of Yesod.
- Yosef requires Egyptians to do **ברית מילה** to receive grain.
- Maharal's explanation of “their grain rotted”:
 - They lacked the discipline of preservation and proper channeling—spilling resources without discernment.

E. “Vice” as a Yesod-role: loyal to the source

- Yosef repeatedly serves as “second-in-command”:
 - to Yaakov, Potiphar, the prison warden, Pharaoh.
 - Message:
 - A Yesod-person doesn't siphon resources for self.
 - He is faithful to the **מקור**, transmitting the mission of the one above him.
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VIII. Directionality: Yesod as “up/down” and as the start of “life in the world”

A. The Maharal's spatial model (cube/world as 3D → 6 directions)

- Earlier middot mapped to directions (e.g., הוד to צפון).
- Yesod corresponds to the vertical axis:
 - ארץ ↔ שמים (up/down).

B. “Kol”: once there's vertical connection, the world fills with חיים

- Directions create a “space,” but Yesod introduces:
 - movement, connection, and therefore “everything within it”—the נבראים.

IX. The avodah of Shovavim: תיקון הברית as “not hijacking your powers”

A. Not only a narrow focus

- While Shovavim can mean strengthening in sexual purity,
- the broader Yesod work is:
 - using talents, time, resources for their intended purpose,
 - not diverting (“company credit card” metaphor) to personal gratification.

B. Discernment as the practical כוח of Yesod

- Only be משפיע where it's right to be משפיע.
 - Only be מקבל from where it's right to be מקבל.
 - Biological mashal:
 - Life-giving and waste emerge from adjacent systems;
 - Yesod is the מקום הבדלה בין הטוב והפסולת.
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X. Yesod and the Yamim Nora'im (Maharal): "Shamayim/Aretz" as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

A. The pairing

- ראש השנה corresponds to שמים:
 - coronating Hashem, focusing upward toward מלכות שמים.
- יום כיפור corresponds to ארץ:
 - purification and transformation of האדם למטה.

B. Why this fits Yesod

- Yesod is the axis connecting above/below:
 - divine purpose "from Heaven" meets human תיקון "on Earth."
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XI. Tu BiShvat: the Seven Species and the Yesod- fruit (olive/oil)

A. שבעת המינים align with seven middot

- The verse:
 - "אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וּשְׂעֵרָה וְגִפְן וְתַאֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ זֵית שֶׁמֶן וְדִבְשִׁי"
(*"A land of wheat and barley, vines and figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey."*)
- Counting the species:
 - זֵית is #6 → corresponding to יסוד.

B. The olive's symbolic resonance with Yesod

- The olive's shape is noted as resembling the מקום הברית.
- Olive oil's primary role:
 - illumination—supportive enabling light (not "an end," but a facilitator).

C. Rav Tzadok: olive/oil and memory/forgetfulness

- Olive oil supports זיכרון (memory).
- Olives contribute to שכחה (forgetfulness).

- Associated framing:
 - masculine as “זכר” (remembering),
 - feminine associated with “נשייה” (forgetting), as in Menashe:
 - forgetting is tied to embodiment/physicality.
- Symbolic mapping:
 - “Oil flowing” as mashpia,
 - “the olive itself” as mekabelet/physical vessel.

XII. In Summary

- **Yesod is hidden in the pasuk**: it’s not another emotion/middah but the **channel** that carries all powers into expression.
- The Gemara ties Yesod to **Milchemet Sisera**, where **shamayim and aretz** interact—modeling influence/receiving at cosmic scale.
- **Sisera** represents Yesod corrupted: overpowering, indiscriminate influence; **Yael** represents resisting inner “reception” through **לשם שמים**.
- **Yosef HaTzaddik** embodies Yesod repaired: **שמירת הברית**, discernment, preservation, and being faithful as a conduit to the mission of his “source.”
- The avodah of Yesod is **discernment and loyalty**—not hijacking life-force (physical, emotional, material, spiritual) for self.
- **Tu BiShvat’s olive/oil** becomes Yesod’s symbol: a supportive light-bearing conduit, tied to memory/forgetfulness and to the dynamics of mashpia/mekabelet.