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DAY 8

***** The Count (using the I-Count Card) *****

Please follow the "5 steps of counting the Omer" on the I-Count Card (which can be downloaded at <http://omerproject.com/assets/docs/I-Count.pdf>). When you arrive at Step #3, please use the following for the count:

Rabbinic: **Ha-yom sh'mona yamim, shehaym shavu-a e-chad v'yom e-chad la-omer.**

Today is eight days, which are one week and one day of the Omer

Kararite: Today is the sixth day of the first week of seven weeks. Today is the sixth day of the counting of fifty days from the day of the waving of the Omer on the morrow after Shabbat.

***** Sing *****

Ana B'Koach represents the seven sefirot and is recited in Rabbinic prayers wherever there is a symbolic ascent of Divine energy from a lower plane to a higher one, or whenever there is any movement from one reality into the next:

A·na, b'cho·ach g'du·lat y'min·cha ta·tir tz'ru·rah

(Please, with the power of Your great right hand free the bound.)

***** This Week According to Rabbinic Mystical Teachings *****

Week Two: Gevurah. Justice, Rigor, Good Boundaries, Strength, Judgment, Discernment, Discipline, Severity, Limitation.

If love (chesed) is the bedrock of human expression, discipline (gevurah) is the channel through which we express love. It gives our life and love direction and focus. Gevurah -- discipline and measure -- concentrates and directs our efforts, our love in the proper directions. It represents discipline and boundary-making, but also indicates separation and struggle. To put gevurah into one's life is to know the value of restraint and even of adversity.

Isaac represents gevurah - character strength, judgement power, and moral restraint - during this week. Isaac's gevurah was expressed in his great awe of G-d and his exacting self-discipline.

***** This Day According to Rabbinic Mystical Teachings *****

This day: Chesed shebe'Gevurah. Love within Strength, Lovingkindness in Discipline.

One word for Chesed of Gevurah: Humility.

***** This Day's Biblical Figures *****

***** with the Rabbinic Mystical Quality of the Day *****

Feminine: Mekonenet, the mourning woman – The Hebrew women mourn their sons when they are thrown into the Nile. Later the Egyptian women mourn their firstborn. What can provide consolation in the face of this suffering? The mourning woman tells the story of her sorrow, gaining strength and love through this act. The mourning woman, mekonenet, later wails at funerals and laments national tragedies, as we see in Jeremiah's description of her. Even within the limits of gevurah (which is separation as well as strength), she is able to find love.

Chesed shebegevurah is the knowledge that our lives are limited, with finite vessels, but they are still full of love.

***** This Day's Rabbinic Refinement of Moral Character *****

The underlying intention and motive in discipline is love. Why do we measure our behavior, why do we establish standards and expect people to live up to them - only because of love. Chesed of gevurah is the love in discipline; it is the recognition that your personal discipline and the discipline you expect of others is only an expression of love. It is the understanding that we have no right to judge others; we have a right only to love them and that includes wanting them to be their best.

Ask yourself:

When I judge and criticize another is it in any way tinged with any of my own contempt and irritation?

Is there any hidden satisfaction in his failure?

Or is it only out of love for the other?

Exercise for the day:

Before you criticize someone today, think twice: Is it out of concern and love?