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Fire-of-Water-of-Fire: Random Expectations of Honor

With the help of Hashem we continue to discuss the element of fire and the trait of *kavod*, honor. Now we will explain honor stemming from **fire-of-water-of-fire**.

Honor is a trait that stems from fire; the pleasure in honor stems from water-of-fire, and **“fire”**-of-water-of-fire specifically refers to the unruly, jumpy and skipping movements that burst out from the water-of-fire.

To give a brief description of how this manifests, there are two kinds of people that seek honor: There is a kind of person who seeks honor in a methodical manner (which is the normal case), with a plan of how to get it, and there is a kind of person who will seek honor in a more “random” kind of manner, with no plan of how to get it (**fire-of-water-of-fire**).

Normal Seeking of Honor: Methodical, Step-By-Step Plan of How To Get It

A person, ever since a person is young, may be deeply concerned of how others view him and of how he appears in the eyes of others. He might even direct the entire course of his life around this drive to appear honorable in the eyes of others, and he will do various things in order to feed this deeply ingrained desire. A person may go to live in a certain place if it will somehow make him appear more dignified in the eyes of others, or he will try to attain a certain dignified status, either in the material world or even in something spiritual, if this will cause others to notice his accomplishment and honor him more for it; each person has various fantasies of honor that he may be wishing to receive.

It can become his very way of how he leads his life. As a young child, he will seek honor in the world of children, doing things and accomplishing things that he knows others children will admire him for. When he is a teenager, and later an adolescent, he will seek accomplishments that are considered honorable in the eyes of teenagers, and later, adolescents.

He will be very goal-oriented on attaining this honor in the eyes of others. Whether he succeeds or not at attaining this goal is a different issue, and in addition, his goals in life may change. But he may go for a long amount of time, or for his whole life, being set on this goal of gaining approval and honor in the eyes of others, and he will do various things to get himself there, step by step. Even if he doesn't try attaining his goals for honor in a step-by-step manner, he will still formulate some kind of long-term plan which he believes will help him reach honorable status. That is the case with someone who seeks honor in a methodical, step-by-step manner.

With some people, this nature will affect them on a smaller scale, and it will only be manifest in certain areas of their life, where they feel they are deserving of honor. Every person has certain talents and qualities which Hashem has granted him with, and a person may come to believe that others should honor him specifically for having the particular quality that he has been blessed with. He may demand honor [mentally] from others when it comes to a certain specific area of his life, and he will not feel a need for honor in other areas of his life. He just wants to be honored for the area that he shines in, which he believes he should be honored for.

Fire-of-Water-of-Fire: Random Expectations of Honor

In this chapter, though, where we are discussing honor that stems from **fire-of-water-of-fire** - which is random “bursts” of honor - we are discussing someone who feels a spontaneous need to be honored, for no particular quality that he has.

For example, a person may ask a question in middle of a class or *shiur* and then expect to be honored by others afterward for asking a good question, or he might have done something for the *minyán* of people which helped the *minyán* run smoothly, and he wants others to accord him honor for this. There are other examples as well of this idea. The point is that according to his understanding, he has deserves honor because he has done a certain thing.

This is like a random “burst” of a need for honor, which he had no previous plans for. He was not trying to get this honor with a methodical, step-by-step plan – rather, he believes that an opportunity for honor has come his way, and he feels entitled to it, even though he did not previously plan on trying to get this honor.

This random “burst” of a need for honor may manifest in a material area or spiritual area, or in immature or mature people – and in many different forms. The common denominator between all of these cases is that there is a random “burst” of a need for honor. Once the person feels it, he will seek to get the honor that he feels deserving of.

There are varying degrees of this “burst” – it may be minimal, or it may be more extreme.

If a person doesn't have a strong amount of **fire-of-water-of-fire** in his system and he has more self-control over his emotions, even if he seeks honor, he will go about it very methodically, instead of trying to get it instantly.

But if a person is more on the impulsive side and his mind is not in that much control over his emotions, and especially if this is joined with a strong amount of **fire-water-of-fire**, he will have an impulsive demand for honor, and he will try to get it very quickly, as soon as he does something which he feels others should acknowledge him for and honor him for.

Anyone who observes this kind of behavior in another person can feel sorry for him. Not only doesn't the person receive the honor he's expecting; he is simply to be pitied, because you can easily notice what kind of lowly situation the person is in. The stronger amount of **fire-water-of-fire** that a person has, the more occurrences he will have in which he feels these “bursts” of an impulsive need for honor.

Fire-of-Water-of-Fire (Random Expectations of Honor) vs. Water-of-Fire (Impulsive Pleasure Seeking)

Let us also understand that there are two different kinds of people who experience an intense need for the pleasure of honor – there is **fire-of-water-of-fire** specifically, and there is also a more general root, **water-of-fire**.

Fire-of-water-of-fire is a “burst” of a desire to experience the pleasure of honor, but there are also many people who greatly pursue the enjoyment of honor for a different reason: they have a lot of **water-of-fire**, in general, in them.

Most people have a consistent source of enjoyment in their life, and honor may be on their list of pleasures that they regularly enjoy. There are also a large amount of people who do not experience consistent honor in their life, but when it does come their way, they enjoy it. If it is possible for them to get the honor they are seeking, they will do so. But others will want the honor as soon as they feel a need for it. This is **fire-of-water-of-fire** which we are discussing in this chapter.

When a person has a strong amount of **water** (of fire), his sense of stability in life is of a very complex nature, and therefore, he will have a difficult time leading a stable life. He needs pleasure to keep him going, and as soon as he feels a need for pleasure, he becomes unstable, until he gets the pleasure. His life temporarily becomes dysfunctional until he can get the pleasure he is seeking. On a deeper note, this kind of person has no understanding of life; he just follows his impulses. If it is the pleasure of honor specifically that he is impulsively trying to get, he is following his “bursts” of **fire-of-water-of-fire**.

These kinds of people lead very unstable lives. Usually, their unstable approach towards life takes its toll on their minds as well, and it weakens their thinking process, as they keep moving towards pleasure and following their impulses. They feel chaotic inside, and they don't settle down where they are. They are usually switching where they live, switching their *chavrusos*, switching jobs, etc. They have no stability. This is the problem created by an imbalance in **water-of-fire**.

Here, however, we are discussing **fire-of-water-fire** specifically. This is when a person is impulsively seeking honor, and it is of a different nature than the general **water-of-fire**.

Obsessed With A Need For Approval

Fire-of-water-of-fire can usually be seen in children [when they do things to get attention], many times. But it is also commonly found in young adolescents, when they are beginning to solidify their identity by gaining the approval of others.

A boy in yeshivah might wish to be noticed for his *hasmadah* (diligence in learning), or he might wish that others view him as a *tzaddik* (a pious individual), or he might dress very stylishly in order to appear dignified and important, or he might want others to be in awe of his family and view them as prestigious people. There are many different ways of he may seek to be honored in the eyes of others, which may randomly come his way. When his friends are talking together, he might wish to stand out in the conversation and mention some quality he has, so that they will be in awe of him.

The stronger that a person feels this need for honor, the less individuality he really has. His own individuality has become a prisoner of the strong amount of **fire-of-water-of-fire** in him, so his true self is buried. He will always try to blend with his friends and with his surroundings in any way that will bring him more honor and prestige from others.

If we examine this deeply, it comes from a tremendous inner emptiness in a person. The person has truly emptied out his soul from all of his individuality [he is not being his true self]. This is the depth of the words of Chazal, “Jealousy, desire and honor take a person out of the world” – which is explained to mean, “out of his own world.” When a person exists only for honor and approval from others, he has no individuality of his own. His “individuality” will be entirely copied from others; his individuality doesn't exist. This is the case with one who is dominated by a strong amount of **fire-of-water-of-fire**.

Honor: Living From "The Outside"

Let us understand the following point, which is an expansive point about the entire topic of honor. It can also apply to other specific areas of honor, but we are explaining it here specifically, because it is here where this point can be seen most dramatically. So while we are only discussing this point here, we should understand that it is a major point which applies to the entire subject of honor.

(As for the problem of instability discussed above, this is part of the subject of the element of water, which we are not discussing in this series).

Honor, when it is evil, is essentially an erroneous perspective, where a person *isn't viewing himself from inside himself*. Instead, he is viewing himself from outside of himself: *in terms of how others view him*.

We mentioned above that honor removes a person from his own individuality, from his true self. When a person lives for honor and esteem in the eyes of others, he will think: "What do others think? What is their view?" He will then align his own behavior according to how *he* thinks *others* think. The way he acts is but a result of a certain way of thinking that he has. It is all stemming from his perspective, which is busy with: "What do others think?"

Living Within The Self Vs. Living Outside of The Self

There is a way to experience life from within, and there is a way to experience life from outside of the self [which is a disconnection from the self, and is a superficial way of living].

Living "within" certainly includes the spiritual dimension of life, the "inner world" of a person, and this is certainly true; in contrast, a person who lives "outside" of himself and disconnected from his own inner world is essentially living in the world outside of us, which is an evil, ruined place. While all of this is a true difference between living on the "inside" versus living on the "outside", there is a more precise definition of it, explained in the works of our Sages: There is a part of a person which needs to remain inside, and there is a part of the person that needs to go outward.

The *Chovos HaLevovos* says that the *seichel* (the intellect) is compared to an inner "light" within a person, which shows a person his qualities and shortcomings, etc. In addition to this light, there is also another light, found outside and above the person (the "above light" is called "A light upon my head", and it is also said of a fetus, of which "a light is illuminated above his head".) The light of the intellect is the "inner light" (*ohr penimi*) described by the *Chovos HaLevovos*, and there is also the light outside and above a person's head, which is called the "surrounding light" (*ohr makif*).

In simpler terms that apply to us on a personal level, there is a way to see things from within yourself, and there is a way to see from outside yourself.

We have explained so far that the impaired state is to see things from outside of yourself, and that the rectified state is to see things from within yourself. Now we will explain how we can go from the impaired state (seeing things from outside yourself) to the rectified state (seeing things from within yourself).

Thinking Based On What Others Think: Towards Self, and Towards Others

Let's begin by examining the ability in a person to be concerned of how others think. It divides into several aspects.

1) A person may view *himself* in terms of *how he thinks* others view him.

2) A person may also use his “thinking from outside the self” to view others, as opposed to viewing others from inside of himself.

The power to “think from the outside the self” is used by the person to view himself, as well as how he views others. Let’s understand that the power to think about yourself based on what others think is a fundamental, necessary ability in life. However, viewing others based on what others think is where the problems start. This is where impaired honor comes in, which we are discussing here.

Honor is one of the traits that remove a person from the world because when a person is always thinking from outside of himself (what others think), instead of from within himself, he is removed from his own inner world. It is beneficial to be concerned of how others only when this ability is kept within its proper boundaries.

If a person views himself from outside of himself, and he can also see himself from within, he has the correct balance, and this is the ideal way of living. But when a person views the outside only from outside of himself, this is usually detrimental.

Of course, this power is holy at times, and that is when a person thinks of what goes on in the world in order to help people and to become sensitive to their needs. But when a person views others based on what others think, and therefore he comes to be concerned of what they think, this can lead him to the evil pursuit of honor.

The View From Within and The View From Outside

To be brief about this, the inner layer of life is when you are living from within yourself, but this is a narrow view when it remains without the aid of the view from the outside.

To illustrate the idea, the *Mesillas Yesharim* says that a person cannot make his way through the “garden maze” of life without the help and direction of a person who has been through the maze already, who is above the maze and who can help him from there. Every person has within his soul the ability to be within the garden maze, as well as the ability to be above the garden maze. The ability to view yourself from within yourself is your soul’s ability to stand within the garden-maze, which is a limited and narrow view. The ability to view yourself from above yourself is your soul’s ability to be above the garden maze.

There is a deep ability to see yourself from the outside. If you can only see yourself from inside of yourself, your view is limited, because you cannot see past the bounds of your own soul. But when you look at yourself from outside of yourself, you receive a more inclusive view, which includes both an expansive, collective view as well as a detailed, individualized view.

This is a deep perspective of life: to acquire the ability to see yourself from the outside of yourself. There is your inner world, and there is also the realm outside of your own world.

The following are some examples to help us understand this concept (understandably, one also needs to have a certain inner understanding in order to absorb what we are saying here).

1 - Awareness of Your Thinking

When a person is thinking, there is what he is thinking about, and he can also be thinking of the very fact that he is thinking. It seems as if these are both the same kind of thought – you are thinking of what you are thinking about, and you are also using this very same ability to think in order to think of the fact that you’re even thinking. However, these are actually two totally different abilities of the soul. The first is really the ability to think from the inside, and the second is the ability to think from

the outside.

There are people who recognize this and they can notice these two simultaneous thoughts appearing at once – You can be thinking of something, and at the very same moment, you are also aware that you are thinking.

If you have control over this thinking process, it plays a big role in prayer. When a person is praying and he's not aware of the fact that he is praying, his thoughts will naturally think about something else. But if he has the ability to think about the mere fact that he is thinking, he will be able to quickly catch himself when his thoughts float away and begin to think about something, and he will immediately return the thoughts to concentrating on his prayer.

Without this ability, a person will only catch himself spacing out during prayer much later, and it will suddenly dawn on him that he spaced out, and now he will start concentrating again. But with the ability to think about the mere fact that you are thinking, you can quickly return your thoughts to what you were thinking about before, because you immediately become aware of where your thoughts have gone.

This is one of the strongest abilities that can enable a person to have concentration in prayer. The more a person acquires the ability to become aware that he's thinking, he will have powerful concentration in prayer. This is not to say that he will never space out when praying. Rather, the person will be aware as soon as it happens, and in turn, he can quickly return to place. (Understandably, the ability to do this will also vary according to the level he is on, so it will not always be done perfectly.)

2) *In Torah Learning*

Another example where we can see this idea is in learning Torah. When a person presents his logic, he is thinking of whatever he is thinking. Why does he trust his way of thinking? He might trust his thinking either because he has a solid way of thinking, or because he has "heart understanding" of a matter. Yet there is a deeper power than this. A person is able to see what is missing from his own thinking. He can see his own thoughts from above the thoughts, and then he can see his logic from above. He gains a more expansive view of whatever he was thinking about, and more importantly, he sees further what is contained in his own thoughts.

If a person has a problem of *katnus mochin* (immature, undeveloped mind), he does not really budge from his initial way of thinking. He has said what he has said, he has thought whatever he thought, and he doesn't see past this. He can certainly re-analyze his own thoughts, and perhaps he can think of an opposite logic than his own, or at least he tries to. But if a person has developed the ability to think about his own thoughts, he can analyze his own thoughts from above the thoughts and uncover greater depth to the thoughts. If he takes it further, he can use this ability to surround a thought from all angles.

The Power of Outside Thinking Enables A High Level of Introspection

This power, even when it is not on the perfected level (and indeed, there is nothing perfect in Creation), gives a person a higher view on things, a more expansive view, a view that sees things with greater clarity – and it is used towards any thought that a person thinks about.

One who develops this ability is able to make deep self-accounting with himself, even while he is doing something. Most of the time, a person is not able to make a self-accounting on his deeds unless it is before the act or after the act, as the *Mesillas Yesharim* describes. But there is also a deeper ability a person can develop, which can make self-accounting in one's deed even in the midst of the

deed.

To think about what you did, before the act or after the act, is a simpler ability of thought: you think about what you did, and you think what you are about to do. But when you think of what you are doing as you are doing, you are not just thinking – you are “seeing” what you are doing.

In the language of Chazal, the simpler ability to think is called *machshavah*, and it is in the category of *katnus mochin*, (or *mochin d'katnus*), the lower level of the mind; the higher ability to think is called *re'iyah*, “seeing” and it is in the category of *gadlus mochin* or *mochin d'gadlus*, the higher level of the mind (in the words of the *Chovos HaLevovos*, it is called *einei haseichel*, “eyes of the intellect”).

The higher level of the mind, *gadlus mochin*, is when one can “see” his thoughts, by viewing them from above and outside of them. It is like being an onlooker towards your own thoughts, watching them from the side. It enables one to see what he is doing, what he is saying, and what he is thinking.

When one gets used to this ability, he is able to inspect his own deeds, feelings, words, and thoughts with a high level of precision. This is not simply because he has become a more truthful person. It is a natural outcome of developing the ability to see your thoughts from above, enabling you to see your entire spectrum from above.

Understandably, even after reaching this level, you will still have difficulties and you are still prone to all kinds of ulterior motives, which can still affect you. But you will have at least developed an ability to greatly influence and move all aspects of your personal *avodah*.

Seeing Deeply Into Others

Through developing this power, you will also see deeper into others. You will not just see what they are doing and try to help them from there. You will be able to see a more expansive view of others, and see a greater picture of the person before you. This is because you will be seeing them from outside of yourself.

Chazal said that “A prisoner cannot release himself from his own jail” – a person is stuck inside his own view, so he cannot see outside of himself and therefore he cannot see the solution to his issue. By asking a wise sage’s advice, the wise sage can show him a view that is outside of him. The simple understanding of this is that the wise sage isn’t going through the suffering of the person coming to him for advice, and therefore he is not stuck inside the suffering of the other person’s situation, so he has the advantage of seeing properly. But the deeper understanding of this is because the wise sage can see the matter from above, so he sees a higher view.

However, if the sage has this ability but he cannot delve into the details of the view, he won’t be able to help the person, because his view will still be limited. He needs to be able to see both the expansive view which sees the matter from above, as well as an individualized, detailed view, which hones in on the details. By combining the two views together, the view from the outside and the view from the inside, and then he can see the complete picture.

Thus, when a person develops the ability of seeing his thoughts from above, he has a much higher, clearer perception towards his view of the world, and towards the souls of people. Chazal taught, “Who is wise? The one who learns from all people”, and this is explained to mean “Learn all people” – to study each person. When you see a person, don’t just focus on a particular detail about him, but on a collective view of him: what is motivating him, what he is striving to achieve, etc.

In Summary

We have briefly described here a certain inner perspective, a power of the soul, which is especially applicable to the subject of this chapter. Understandably, the more a person is in touch with this power of the soul, the more he can relate to what we have described here, and the same is true vice versa: the less a person is in touch with this ability, the less he can relate to the ideas here.

So far, we have described the **holy** use of the power to “think from the outside”.

Evil “Outside Thinking” Stems From Inner Emptiness

In contrast, the **evil** use of this power is what we described in the beginning of this chapter: the aspect of human nature to be concerned what others are thinking about him.

When a person is busy with such thoughts, this does not come from the inner power of “thinking from the outside”. Rather, it stems from **an inner emptiness being released outward!** When a person’s inner emptiness is released outward, what does a person see? The person will only see the people who are outside of him.

What will happen then? If he has the quality of a “good heart”, he will see other people and wish to help them, and he may become a great *baal chessed*. But if he doesn’t have the quality of a “good heart”, he will heavily analyze other people’s lives. This will follow with jealousy, desire, and honor. Either he will become jealous of others’ lives, or he will wonder what they are thinking of him and he will seek honor from them, or he will desire what they have, feeling that he should have it too.

The traits of “jealousy, desire and honor remove a person from the world” because they remove him from his own inner world, and they cause him to think about all others who are outside of him. (Here we are not discussing jealousy or desire, but honor.) When a person becomes busy in his thoughts of other people’s lives, he is essentially entering into the trait of honor, because he will be thinking all the time of what *others* are thinking about him.

And, on a more extreme level, if this is a person has a lot of **fire-of-water-of-fire** in himself, he will become *totally* obsessed with what others are thinking about him. Going deeper with this, he will become totally disconnected from himself, and instead he will be busy thinking all the time of what *others* are thinking about him.

This is a level of total inner emptiness of the “I” of a person: when a person defines his inner self according to what others are thinking about him. It becomes his perspective in life.

On a more subtle level, this divides into two levels. One kind of person will think that he *is* defined according to what others think about him, and another kind of person will base his *honor* on what others are thinking about him. In either case, though, this is a result of inner emptiness. In the deepest recesses of his thoughts, he is busy thinking what others are thinking - concerning his innermost self.

This will result in either jealousy of others, desiring what others have, or wishing for honor from others - based solely on, “What do others think, about me?”

When one lives in this way, a person’s perspective is immersed in his external surroundings, of “What are others thinking...?” This is all he is busy with, and it is only these kinds of thoughts which fill his psyche. Such a life is a life of destruction that results from pursuing honor.

The stronger one’s **fire-of-water-of-fire** is, the more obsessed he is with what others are thinking about him. He is constantly living in the thoughts of others and what they are thinking about, concerning him.

Kavod (Honor) Always Contains Bizayon (Shame)

When a person wants to receive *kavod* from others in his surroundings, let's understand the following point about this, which is true about pursuing all forms of *kavod* in general, but especially true about a person whose pursuit of honor stems from **fire-of-water-of-fire**, which is a more dramatic form of the problem, for it causes a person to impulsively move after honor.

Let's understand something fundamental about *kavod*, honor. (Here we are not talking about good and holy *kavod*, but evil *kavod*, which is when a person pursues *kavod*). We must know that **all *kavod* always comes together with *bizayon*, shame**. If you doubt this, take a look at the reality of life. There is no person in the world who only receives honor, who is never shamed sometimes.

Even Moshe Rabbeinu, the most honorable person who ever lived, was disdained by the angels when he ascended to Heaven. The angels said, "Should a man born from woman (a human) be allowed here?" They considered him lowly. This is the same Moshe Rabbeinu who merited the *Shechinah* to dwell upon him when he entered the *Beis HaMikdash*. Moshe Rabbeinu was allowed to grasp the *Kisei HaKavod*^[1] of Hashem. Yet, in spite of this, when he ascended to Heaven, he was not accorded honor.

The fundamental lesson we learn from this is that all *kavod* (honor) in the world comes together with *bizayon*, shame. A hint to this is that there are 22 letters of the *Aleph Beis*, and 22 is כ"ב, which stands for כבוד (*kavod*\honor) and בזיון (*bizayon*\shame). This is the way Hashem has designed the Creation: the concepts of honor and shame are always together, like ink and paper. If there is honor, there will also be shame that comes along with it.

The Varying Levels of Wishing To Receive Honor

There are two kinds of people with regards to honor. One kind of person, when he is honored (or if he thinks he is being honored....) will be confident that everyone will honor him. If he is a Rav in a *shul*, he may be confident that everyone respects him, and that he won't have any "Korach and his followers" in his congregation, *Baruch Hashem*. They are all dedicated to the cause of according him honor....

That is a fantasy.

Another kind of person is a bit more sensible. He is aware that not everyone will respect him. He knows that some people will respect him, and some won't. But does that mean he can deal with shame, when someone comes along and humiliates him? He might survive by focusing on those who do honor him, but he is not prepared to go through humiliation.

Another kind of person might be fully aware that not even one person around him feels a respect for him, but he is satisfied with the fact that everyone shows him external displays of honor and respect in his presence, perhaps because they are afraid of him, for whatever reason. He might be powerful or wealthy, so people are afraid to start up with him, and everyone will accord him honor, because they have no choice. He may just be like the town *poritz* whom everyone honored, because they were terrified of him.

He may be fully aware that not even one person respects him and honors him, but he gains a sense of honor from the external displays of honor that they show him. It is all a lie, because it is all external, and they do not actually respect him in their hearts. Even so, he might not be able to part from the external "*kavod*" he receives from them....

Two Reasons Why Honor Is A Fallacy

We should understand that the above shows us the fallacy in *kavod*. Whenever a person receives *kavod*, it is never completely *kavod*. It is *bizayon* (shame)! *Kavod*\honor comes from outside of the self, and it will never enable a person to be in touch with his inner self.

Why not? There are two reasons for it.

One of the reasons we already mentioned before: the pursuit of honor stems from an inner emptiness, and therefore when a person gets *kavod*, it will not fill his void. But now we will say a deeper reason. It is because *kavod* is never completely *kavod*. It contains a contradiction. Honor will always include some shame that comes along with it.

When People Aren't Aware That Honor Is A Fallacy

When a person is not aware of the above, these are the options:

- 1) Either a person is delusional, so he will think that everyone honors him;
- 2) Or, he is aware that some people honor him, and some don't;
- 3) Or, he is satisfied with the little bit of honor he does receive;
- 4) Or, he is willing to go through some humiliation in order to receive honor;
- 5) Or - worst of all - he is aware that people disdain him, yet even so, he is satisfied with the external forms of honor he receives from them. He is aware that the honor is only external and superficial, yet even so, he enjoys it. This is the depth of the words of Chazal that honor is one of the traits that remove a person from the world - it is because honor stems from the world of externalities and superficiality, which turns a person into a superficial person when he gets used to it, and he won't care what the truth is. As long as he's getting external honor, he feels pleasure in it.

How To Stop Seeking Attention From Others

When we understand the ruination that lays in *kavod*\honor - the fact that all *kavod* brings with it *bizayon*\shame - we should also know that this is also the remedy for *kavod*. "From the wound itself, comes the recovery."

When a person is less aware of what takes place outside of himself, he will be immersed in *kavod*. But the more a person learns to think outside of himself, the more he can become aware of the idea that all *kavod* also contains *bizayon*\shame. When a person becomes very aware of this, whenever he receives *kavod*, he will rectify the *kavod* by **focusing on the *bizayon*\shame** that it ultimately contains. Then his enjoyment in the *kavod* will dissipate.

Understandably, this will not totally cause his enjoyment in *kavod* to vanish; we cannot completely fix any of our *middos* as we are on This World. But if you take the path presented here, it will greatly lessen the feeling of pleasure in honor, when you focus on the shame that comes along with it.

In Summary

Let us summarize what we have discussed here until now, so that we can be clear about this and then conclude, with *siyata d'shmaya*.

Fire-of-water-of-fire is an inner emptiness in the soul, which impulsively and quickly moves [after attention and honor from others], and it leads a person towards an entirely superficial kind of life.

Honor is entirely external and superficial, and for this reason, a person may find himself enjoying honor even when he knows it is empty of any inner content.

Many times the external display of *kavod* which a person receives is empty to begin with. There is nothing there. In spite of this, people are willing to sell their all of lives for this little bit of meaningless *kavod* that they are able to get.

Step One: Understand That All Honor Contains Shame

Thus, practically speaking, in order for a person to rectify the problem of wishing to receive *kavod*, a person should realize that all *kavod* (honor) contains *bizayon* (shame).

After a person absorbs this perspective, the next stage is that as soon as a person feels a desire for *kavod*, or whenever he receives it, he should awaken this perspective that *kavod*\honor really means *bizayon*\shame. The resulting pain that a person feels from this is the beginning of the rectification for *kavod* (honor).

To emphasize, this is the beginning part of the rectification for *kavod* - it is not yet the total rectification.

Step Two: Remove The Kavod (Honor) and Uncover Your Etzem (Essence)

Even more so, there is the following very deep point to absorb, which further rectifies the desire to be honored by others.

Hashem is called "*B'kevodo, u'vatzmo*" - "In His glory, and Himself" - there are two aspects: the "*atzmo*" (Himself) or "*etzem*" (essence) of Hashem, and there is the *k'vodo* (His glory), or the *kavod* (honor) of Hashem. Man [who is fashioned in the image of G-d] as well contains these two major aspects, on his own level: his *etzem* (self), and his *kavod* (honor).

Therefore, you should understand that the fact that *bizayon*\shame comes together with *kavod* is what brings a person to his own *etzem*\essence! This is what is meant in the term, "*Atzmo she'lmaalah m'Kevodo*", "His essence is above His honor."

Evil *kavod*\honor is entirely an uprooting of the self; it is an escape outward from one's actual self. The rectification for *kavod*, on a higher level, is to be concerned only for the *kavod* of Hashem, as it is written, "*For My honor, I created [the world].*" In terms of our personal soul, the way to rectify *kavod*, on the external level, is to realize that *kavod*\honor always comes along with *bizayon*\shame.

The deeper level of the rectification for *kavod*, however, is not simply to take away your own *kavod*\honor, but to remove your *kavod*\honor and in its place to reveal your *etzem*\essence.

This is actually the deep joy of the soul which one can experience when others shame him. The Sages hinted to this in the term "*yissurin shel ahavah*", "suffering out of love", which a person undergoes through *bizayon*\shame. In general terms, a person can have *emunah* that it is the will of Hashem that he should suffer shame from others. If he desires to have purity of heart, shame can also be a *taanug* (pleasure) of the soul if the person is aware that he is exchanging his *kavod* for reward in the World To Come.

But the deeper understanding of the *taanug* one can have in *bizayon* (shame) is because it removes the "garment" closest to the soul - *kavod* - which directly covers the soul itself (the *etzem*\essence). When the "garment" of *kavod* is removed, through *bizayon* - being that all *kavod* contains *bizayon* - a person penetrates into his very *etzem*\essence.

Rectifying Fire-of-Water-of-Fire

This ability, when developed, is the antithesis to **fire-of-water-of-fire**.

Fire-of-water-of-fire causes a person to impulsively and quickly move outside of himself, where he is busy thinking what others are thinking about him, and in doing so, he keeps leaving his own self and exiting further and further outward from himself.

In contrast to this, the rectified nature of this power is to uncover the *bizayon*\shame that lays in *kavod*\honor is, that whenever a person receives *kavod*, he can remove the outer layer of the *kavod* and reach the point underneath the *kavod*, which is his *etzem*\essence. In this way, his external layer and his inner layer unify, and herein begins his “world of rectification”.

In Conclusion

This concept is one of the most important lessons to understand about the entire trait of *kavod*\honor.

[1] Throne of Glory

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/fixing-your-fire-honor-008-attention-seeking>