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Water-of-Water-of-Fire: The Pleasurable Feeling In Honor

With the help of Hashem, let us continue to learn about the element of fire and its trait of *kavod*, honor. Here we will learn about **water-of-water-of-fire**. Honor is “fire”, and “water-of-fire” refers to the pleasure in honor, and “**water-of-water-of-fire**” in particular is the root of all pleasure in honor, and, to understand this in subtler terms, it means to become “dragged” after the pleasure of honor.

We have explained in the past that honor is a deeper kind of pleasure, which stems from the spiritual realm, and although it is of a spiritual nature, it extends onto this physical realm, where it can be experienced. Whenever a person feels honor, he is feeling a revelation of spiritual, heavenly pleasure that has extended into this lower realm we live on.

Honor does not come from our own realm; it comes from above this realm. It is therefore the most fundamental experience that a person has. All souls of *Yisrael* are rooted in the *Kisei HaKavod*, the Throne of Glory; thus the highest experience of man is *kavod*\honor, an offshoot of the *Kisei HaKavod*.

Honor - A Subtle, Refined Pleasure

Based upon this, let's understand that the pleasure in honor is a concept that envelopes all of the world, and it can be found on any level.

There are gruffer kinds of pleasure and refined kinds of pleasure. The material world contains gruff kinds of pleasure, and the more we elevate our level, the more refined our pleasure becomes. Honor, which is of the spiritual realm, is the most refined kind of pleasure that exists.

When a person is enjoying a pleasant dream, this also feels tangible. It feels real to him when it's happening. His intellect has gone and his imagination has taken over, and in addition, his physical body doesn't have a hold on him, so the pleasure in the dream feels more subtle.

Therefore, the more refined and subtle a person becomes, the more he can feel the pleasure of honor, and the more drawn he may become after honor. It is as if he has acquired different taste buds, which can enjoy a new taste that others aren't experiencing. The Hebrew word for “refined” is *eden*, from the word *adinus*, “refinement”, a hint to “Gan Eden” (Paradise) – the place where there is heavenly, spiritual pleasure. The more refined a person's pleasure becomes, the more he is connected to the level of Gan Eden.

Honor is the most refined kind of pleasure within one's experience. However, as mentioned previously, there is both "gruff" honor as well as "refined" honor. If honor causes a person to become weighed down, to the point that he has become heavily tied down to the honor he's receiving [see Chapter 1, "Heavy Honor"], the honor then becomes a very gruff kind of pleasure. For example, a person can feel how honor weighs him down in the way he walks, in the way he sits, and in the place where he chooses to settle.

But most of the time, honor is such a subtle and refined kind of pleasure that it cannot be tangibly felt. When a person eats and he is enjoying it, he feels the pleasure tangibly. The same is true when a person sees something that he enjoys, where he can feel the pleasure, tangibly. But honor cannot be tangibly felt. Therefore, even the pleasure one receives from honor cannot be tangibly felt. That is why the pleasure in honor is the most refined kind of pleasure there is. The gruffer one is, the more he will seek material kinds of pleasure, and if he does seek honor, he will seek a gruff kind of honor, so that he can feel it tangibly.

To give an example, during a dream, a person is enjoying it, and this is a tangible kind of pleasure. When one is awake, the intellect is stronger than the imagination, so the imagination will not be felt that strongly. The bodily senses are gruffer while being awake, so the pleasure of the imagination is not as easily felt while being awake. But in a dream, when the bodily senses go to sleep and the imagination overpowers the intellect, the pleasure of the dream will feel sharper.

That is why if a person imagines in a dream that he is eating, he might enjoy it even more than he was awake, because the experience of the dream feels sharper, for the feelings are more refined there. Refined pleasure is a more powerful experience of pleasure than enjoying the physical.

Thus, from all the pleasures that can be experienced on this world, the most refined pleasure is the pleasure in honor. It can be experienced when awake, when the body's senses are gruffer and where it is harder to sense more refined kinds of pleasure, and in spite of this, a person can experience the refined pleasure that is honor even while fully awake.

That is why the more refined and attuned a person becomes, the more he will be drawn towards the pleasure of honor. To illustrate the idea, a taste-tester has far more enjoyment than others when tasting something, because his sense of taste is much more refined, and therefore his pleasure in the taste is more powerful. The same is true for one who has become more refined and attuned, who is able to have more pleasure in the feeling of honor. His experience of pleasure is more refined and subtle, but it is also more powerful.

Rectifying The Pleasure In Honor: Tracing The Honor To Its Heavenly Source

So far, we have explained how this applies to evil honor. Now we will see how one can use this idea to rectify evil honor.

We explained earlier that honor stems from the heavenly realm, and it is experienced on this world. When honor is used for evil, a person uses honor for himself, experiencing the honor only with regards to himself, [and therefore he feels that others should honor him, so he will demand it from them, at least in his mind]. In contrast, the holy, true kind of honor is when the lower level appreciates and "honors" the higher level.

Thus, honor is holy when the lower level is "honoring" the higher level. For example, when a child honors his parents, the child is the "lower level" who honors the parent, "the higher level", being that the parents are on a higher plane than him. Similarly, when honoring a *melech* (king), the people who honor him recognize that he is above their level and therefore they accord him honor.

But when a person uses honor for his own purposes and he enjoys it, this is where honor becomes evil. When a person demands his own honor, he is not demanding the honor of the heavenly source that it came from – rather, he is demanding honor of the lower level that it has extended to, which is the person himself. That is where honor becomes evil.

Therefore, the rectified way to use honor is for a person to recognize its higher source, as opposed to recognizing himself as the source of the honor.

These are subtle ideas, and this is especially because honor in general is a subtle and refined concept to understand.

Impaired Honor Vs. Rectified Honor

It is impossible to live without honor in our life. But we must know that there is impaired honor, and rectified honor.

Impaired honor is when a person demands honor for himself, because he is attributing himself as the source of the honor; whereas holy honor is that even as it is being experienced within oneself, the person experiencing it traces it back to its heavenly source. Others may honor him because they believe that he is to be honored, but the person himself who is being honored must think that the honor that he experiences is coming from Above, and not from himself.

Rectified Honor - When The Lower Level Connects To The Higher Level

Let us understand this idea better.

Honor is the connecting force between the lower and higher realms, for it allows the lower realm to have some perception of the higher realm, and to begin to understand the higher realm. When the lower realm can begin to understand the higher realm, that is *kavod* (honor), and it is this perspective towards *kavod* where one can experience the rectified form of pleasurable honor, which is **water-of-water-of-fire**.

Thus, honor exists in order to serve as a connecting point to something else. The lower realms are sustained by the higher realms, and one of the ways in which the lower realms are connected to the higher realms is through *kavod*.

For example, the *melech* (king) had special royal clothing, so that others can see his honor and thus be in awe of him. There is a *halachah* that it is forbidden to see a king unclothed. A king can only be seen by others in his royal garments, and when others behold the sight of his royal clothes, this is how they connect with the king, who is really above them. Clothes are "*levush*" in Hebrew, which has the same letters as the word "*shvil*", "way", because through clothing, a person is enabled to connect to something.

Thus, the pleasure in honor, which is rooted in **water-of-water-of-fire**, is not just another form of honor. It is an entirely different kind of honor. In its evil use, a person enjoys honor for his own purposes, demanding that others honor him. In its holy use, a person attributes the honor he is receiving to a higher source, and not himself; and that is how he connects to the level above him.

The Power To Enjoy Honor is a Necessary Quality of the Soul

It seems simply that in order to rectify the trait of honor, we must destroy our pleasure in honor. But the truth is that we must know how to enjoy honor, in the right way. The pleasurable feeling in honor is a fundamental force in all of our spiritual success, which we need to channel in the right direction.

Therefore, the main part of rectifying the trait of honor is not to destroy the pleasure in honor (although there is certainly a place for that too in our inner work), but to enjoy it in the right way, as we are explaining. Woe to the person who has no pleasure in honor! It may seem to us initially that honor is an evil trait which we must learn how to stop enjoying, but the truth is the very opposite than this. The pleasure of the soul in the spiritual is essentially a pleasure in honor.

The Torah, which is Hashem's light that can be enjoyed and understood by people, is essentially a form of enjoying honor. Honor comes from above, and we need to return it to above. The souls above have pleasure in the honor being accorded to them - that is, the honor of Hashem, which they can taste; that what the soul yearns to experience.

(There is also a higher level, where the soul yearns only for Hashem Himself, which is higher than the pleasure in the honor that is experienced by this).

It is written, "*Show me, please, Your glory.*" - this is the deepest pleasure of the soul, to enjoy seeing the glory of Hashem. Thus, one must know what glory and honor is, in order to appreciate this spiritual bliss of enjoying the glory of Hashem.

Spiritual Progress Is Through "Honoring" The Higher Level

Since honor is what enables a person to connect to the level above him, if one does not have pleasure in honor, he will not be able to rise to a higher level.

How can person reach a higher spiritual level? Simply speaking, it is through exertion to get there. But the more precise way to get there is through "honoring" the higher level. When you "honor" the higher level, you are then connected to it, and now that you are connected to it, you can reach the "honor" of the higher level, and then, you can aim for an even higher level than before.

Example 1 - Honoring Parents

Here is an example of this idea. In the *mitzvah* of honoring parents, the child is "below" his parents, for the parents are "above" the child; through honoring them, the child actually becomes connected to them. How does a person connect to his parents? The parents are the root of the child, so if the child honors the parent, the honor itself will connect him to them.

It is also true that they are his root in the sense that he has been born from these parents, but what connects a child to his parents right now? One of ways of how a child connects to his parents (I emphasize here that it is only one of the ways) is through honoring them. When the child honors the parents, he rises to their level, which connects him to them.

To understand this in subtler terms, the first step is that he becomes connected to them, through honoring them; and after connecting to them, he can rise to their level - a higher level than before.

Therefore, if he would try to become his own "father" without first honoring the father, he is attempting to rise to a higher level than the current one, through skipping the stage of honoring the parent [and since he is skipping a level, he will not succeed].

In order to connect to any higher level, one must first accord honor to the higher level, and only then can he connect to it. In order to connect to the *havayah* (essence) of something, one first has to be connected to the *kavod* (honor) in it, by "honoring" its reality.

Example 2 - In Learning Torah

Here is another example of this idea, and a fundamental one.

When one learns the Torah, day and night, how does he reach comprehension in Torah? Simply it is because by exerting ourselves to understand it, we can then reach understanding in it. But the deeper reason is because the more honor one accords to the Torah, that is how one will come to comprehend it. Honoring the Torah is what connects one to the Torah, and then one can have comprehension in his own Torah learning. But if a person learns Torah and he doesn't have a respect for the Torah, he will not understand his learning, because if he does not honor its reality, he cannot connect to it.

It is not enough just to enjoy what you are trying to acquire, if you don't have a respect for it. That is why even if a person enjoys to learn Torah, if he doesn't have a respect for the Torah, he won't reach understanding in Torah, because if he doesn't honor the Torah, he won't be able to connect himself to it.

This applies as well to anything you want to reach. In order to reach anything, one must first "honor" it.

"Run Away From Honor" - By Returning Honor To Its Root

Therefore, when one needs to fix the pursuit of enjoying honor, the *avodah* is not simply to uproot the pleasure of honor, but to return the honor to its root. There is also place for uprooting some of the pleasure in honor, but this is not the main part of the rectification. The main aspect of the rectification here is to avoid attributing the honor to yourself, and to instead trace it back to its higher source.

Chazal state that when one runs away from honor, honor will run after him. To where should a person run to, when running away from honor? Simply speaking, it means to go to a different place, if one finds himself in a situation where others are according him honor. But the depth of this matter is that one should run away from the honor that is being attributed to him, and to "run away" to the higher source of the honor that is above him - the *kavod* of Hashem.

This is the root of rectifying honor. Instead of avoiding honor, we can learn how to use it in the right way, by returning the honor to its proper root. One should run after the "honor" that is the Torah, which is the same honor accorded to Torah scholars, and such honor is the pleasure of the soul.

The Key To All Spiritual Ascension: Understanding The Concept of Honor

When one understands this, he has the root of spiritual ascension. The proper view towards the concept of *kavod*\honor is the root of all spiritual ascension.

Honor feels exalting. It is evil only when a person wants others to honor him, because he wants to raise his own ego, which is stemming from conceitedness, which can also be contained in honor. But true, holy honor has nothing to do with conceit. It is a revelation of the heavenly realm within this lower realm. Thus, true *kavod*\honor is a necessary force for the soul, in order to have any spiritual ascension. That is why a person should not belittle the idea of *kavod*\honor.

The Holy Use of Water-of-Water-of-Fire: Yearning To Reveal The Glory of Hashem

The very idea of *kavod* is central to our entire spiritual dimension, because any and every soul of the Jewish people must reveal a yearning to know and recognize "the *kavod* (honor, or glory) of Hashem". The purpose of Creation is to reveal the *kavod*\glory of Hashem: "*It is all called in My name; For My glory, I created it.*" One must reveal a yearning in the soul to know of this *kavod* of Hashem.

This is the holy use of **water-of-water-of-fire**: When the soul is moving towards this *kavod* of Hashem, this is the root of all spiritual ascension. The soul yearns for its root. It not only yearns for the *Kisei HaKavod* that it was carved from - it yearns to reach the very *kavod* of Hashem. Therefore, the concept of *kavod* must envelope all of a person's life's work.

Many times a person can learn a lot of Torah, yet he doesn't gain an appreciation of *kavod HaTorah*, an honor for the Torah. He can be busy with trying to understand the Torah's wisdom, its purely intellectual aspect - yet in spite of all his study of Torah, he may not gain a greater sense of respect for the Torah. He may "know" what "*kavod haTorah*" is on an intellectual level, but it is mostly pushed to the side in his mind, in favor of simply studying the Torah on an intellectual level, which certainly must occupy his mind.

But the more a person contemplates and understands that the purpose of Creation is to recognize the glory of Hashem, the more the soul will want to be in touch with it, and it will be dragged after this, to the point that it is naturally thinking about this concept on a regular, ongoing basis.

When it comes to this point, of regularly contemplating "the glory of Hashem", there are two kinds of people who are interested in knowing about this [either of them are proper and good]. One kind of person will express this yearning by trying to learn more about it, so that it gains greater definition in his mind. Another kind of person will actually do certain actions in order to increase the honor of Hashem in the world. Each of these are expressions of the soul of this yearning to reveal the honor of Hashem, to know of the *Melech HaKavod*, "the King of Glory."

But as long as this concept only remains on an intellectual level, it will be hard for a person to relate to, and even if he does understand it a little, he will feel like this concept is very far from him. One may easily relate to learning Torah and to doing all of the *mitzvos*, and he can relate to his own honor, but to be involved with revealing Hashem's honor can feel way above his grasp. But when a person bypasses the thick layers that have developed on his heart, when he is in touch with his *neshamah* which yearns for the revelation of the *Kisei HaKavod* (and, even more so, the *kavod* of Hashem), it will become a part of the way he lives and how he understands life.

Example of Using Holy Water-of-Water-of-Fire: Declaring Malchiyus (Hashem's Kingship) On Rosh HaShanah

A clear example of where this idea will manifest itself is on Rosh HaShanah, which is a day that is mainly about declaring Hashem's *malchiyus* (Kingship), which is all about the *kavod* of Hashem. If a person is not in touch with the ideas described here - the **holy** use of **water-of-water-of-fire** - what will happen when it comes Rosh HaShanah? He won't know what to do with himself, when he starts contemplating the idea of declaring *malchiyus*. He never thinks about what this higher *kavod* is, so he will have a hard time trying to get in touch with it on Rosh HaShanah.

Rectified Water-of-Water-of-Fire Is To Feel Pleasure In The Desire To Reveal The Glory of Hashem, His Torah, His Sages, and His People

Indeed, the ideas described here in this chapter will be far from the level of most people. But the more a person gets used to the idea of tracing honor to its higher source when he is experiencing it, and he "runs away from honor" in this way - that is how he can get in touch with the higher *kavod*, the glory of Hashem. His yearning for the revelation of this glory will increase, and he will also be in touch with the *kavod* of the Torah, the *kavod* of the wise sages, the *kavod* of *Klal Yisrael*. He will wish that all of this *kavod* be revealed.

When he feels the pleasure in this *kavod*, it is the pleasure contained in the holy kind of **water-of-**

water-of-fire, and when he doesn't feel this pleasure, this is what is meant by "joining the pain of the *Shechinah*", which mourns the lack of the revelation of Hashem's Presence on this world.

Without revealing this pleasure in Hashem's glory, a person will only be to cry and mourn over it when reciting *Tikkun Chatzos* (which itself is a worthy level, and only if we would all be even on this level), but he would not be crying over the absent *kavod* of Hashem; rather, he would just be sad over the various things that are missing in life which are painful.

But when a person gets in touch with the holy **water-of-water-of-fire** in his soul, a person reveals a deep pleasure in desiring the revelation of the *kavod* of Hashem upon the world, the *kavod* of His Torah upon the world, the *kavod* of the wise elders and sages of *Klal Yisrael*, and the *kavod* of *Klal Yisrael*. When a person has pleasure in these concepts, he can then feel pained over their absence.

This is all the depth behind the holy, rectified use of **water-of-water-of-fire**.

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