



SEEKING SPECIFIC HONOR 16. *Higher Honor Is The Design of Creation - Therefore It Is The Root Power That Enables Change*

To most people who read and hear this, these words will seem like a closed riddle. They will wonder: What is the connection between the avodah of recognizing the concept of higher kavod/honor, with our avodah of changing our middos? What do these two concepts have to do with each other?

However, for this, we can turn to the verse, “All has been created in My Name, and for My glory, I created it.” Thus, the very “blood” that runs throughout the design of Creation is the honor that results from the Creation, and that is why anything in this Creation can only be changed from the “honor” that results from it.

From a superficial perspective, all we see is many different negative middos which need to be changed, and we do not see how the concept kavod contains the key to changing all of the middos. But when we understand more about the depth of the design of our life, since “All has been created in My Name, and for My glory”, all of this Creation must result in “honor”, and this is also the reason why the very neshamah (soul) of all of Creation is defined as the kavod/honor in Creation.

Therefore, it is only kavod (higher honor) which can change anything, for everything in Creation is for the purpose of revealing the higher kavod of Hashem's glory upon the Creation. This higher kavod is what moves all of Creation, and that is why kavod is the power that can change everything.

17. In Conclusion Thus, in summary, in order to simply fight and overcome negative traits, we can do this by working with our middos directly, but if we want to overturn/rectify/sweeten the negative traits, we can only do so through accessing the soul's power of higher kavod/honor.

We explained that this is used on an evil level when one uses the “fire-of-fire” in his soul, which we have begun to explain about in this chapter, and this is somewhat restrained by the “earth” aspect of fire-of-fire. But when we use this power on a holy level, it is the ability to change all of our middos, for it is the very inner essence behind all of the middos, and it is the core reason of how they are rectified. **CONCLUSION OF DIZ**

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PRESTIGE

Simple Difference Between Gaavah (Conceit) & Kavod (Honor)

The element of fire rises higher. Two similar middos (character traits) which come from fire are gaavah (conceit), and kavod (honor). Fire's nature to rise higher is the root of gaavah (conceit), where the fire comes out as a person who wishes to pride himself above others as he rises higher in his ambitions and aspirations - he becomes prideful in regards to himself. Kavod (honor) is similar to gaavah in that it is also an expression of fire's movement to rise higher, because when a person feels honored, he feels that he has been made higher and above others. But kavod differs from gaavah in that gaavah is when prides himself, whereas kavod is a good feeling that one receives from others.

Honor is fire's movement to rise higher. In general, honor is an expression of fire as it seeks to rise higher - through receiving honor from others.

Fire-of-Fire – Animal Soul's Wish To Be In A Higher Place

What then is fire-of-fire, then, with regards to honor?

Honor isn't merely an expression of fire to rise higher the way that conceit is. The depth to honor, its inner root, is in the neshamah (Divine soul), for the neshamah is called kavod (honor), and as the Baal HaMeor and other commentaries explained, based on the verse, “So that honor will sing to You”. From this we learn a deep point, that there's an inner root of honor, the desire in a person to want honor so that he will rise higher.

With a superficial view, we view honor as a bad character trait – the person wishes to rise higher in a way that's false and not genuine. But from a more inner view, we can see

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that a person's desire for honor is coming from the yearning of our animal soul (nefesh habehaimis) to be on the level of our Nefesh Elokus (G-dly soul), which is called kavod (honor): "So that the soul will sing to You." The desire for honor is therefore not merely from the world of falsity, of seeking something improper. Desiring honor, on a deep level, is really the realization of the animal soul of the honor that the G-dly soul is – and the animal soul wants to be in the place of the G-dly soul. Honor is therefore [not just a desire to rise higher, like the trait of conceit, but] the desire to be above.

When honor is channeled properly, the animal soul desires to be on the level of the G-dly soul. Although this desire is coming from the animal soul, it is the one truthful desire that exists in the animal soul, when it wishes "to become illuminated in the light of the life, of G-d".

But the animal soul misuses the trait of honor when it wants to simply be above its level. It's not simply when the animal soul of a person wishes for others to honor him and make him above others. It's more subtle. The honor that comes from fire-of-fire is when a person wants to be above, because true honor is when one is being recognized and honored for being on a higher level.

Clear examples of this are the honor given to parents, honoring one's Rebbi (Torah teacher), and the honor that one had to show towards the Beis HaMikdash etc. In all of these examples, we are honoring that which is above us. When a child honors a parent and when a student honors his Torah teacher, he's not merely showing respect, rather he is connecting himself to that which is above his level. He is below the one whom he is giving honor to, and when he gives that honor, he is giving honor to that which is above him and he is thereby connecting himself to that which is above him. And all the more so when one gives honor to Hashem, which gives him a connection to the Glory of Hashem.

Thus, when a person honors Hashem properly, and when he honors his parents, Torah teacher, and the Beis HaMikdash [and honoring Torah scholars, honoring Shabbos, honoring a Shul and Beis Midrash, honoring the Torah, etc.] he is connecting to that which is he is honoring – and

then he is truly found in a higher place when he does so.

This is "fire-of-fire". With just the element of fire itself being activated, a person is drawn towards conceit – he wants to right higher to a place which he really has no connection to. But when "fire"-of-fire is activated, the person gives honor to that which is above him and he becomes connected with the source that he is honoring, he is truly rising to that higher level [that is, in the holy use of fire-of-fire].

In summary, the deep root of wanting honor is because a person is comprised of both a G-dly soul and animal soul, and the animal soul is able to feel its lowliness since it is formed from physicality, and it is able to desire to be in the same place as the G-dly soul, which is rooted in the Throne of Glory (every Jewish soul is rooted in the Throne of Glory). The deeper way to understand it, as explained here, is that when a person gives honor, he connects to a higher place.

When honoring a parent, one is really connecting to the level of the parent who is above the child, because honor connects the lower plane with the higher plane [as explained in previous chapters].

A clear example of how honor connects one to the higher plane is that when Moshe was able to grab onto the Throne of Glory even though the Shechinah doesn't descend within 10 handbreadths of This World and Moshe didn't rise above those 10 handbreadths, the Throne of Glory didn't come down but Moshe was able to grab onto it and thereby be connected to it. Similarly, when the angels didn't want Moshe in Heaven and Moshe was frightened about being burned by the angels, Hashem told Moshe, "Grab onto the Throne of My Glory and answer them [the angels]", meaning that Moshe connected himself with that honor in Heaven – the Throne of Glory – and since he was now connected to it, he could be there.

That is the fire-of-fire within honor – the ability to rise to a higher place, to be connected to the Higher Honor. There are one of two ways how this can be. Either one's animal soul connects itself with the G-dly soul, or one honors something which deserves to be honored (parents, Torah teachers, etc.) and thereby he becomes to that which is above him. **013 TO BE CONTINUED**

YARDSTICK 1 – WHICH GOOD SOUL-CAPABILITY DO WE USE MOST?

The first yardstick (by which we can figure out if an ability is stronger or weaker) is, by noticing how often we are using a certain good soul-capability.

In order to figure this out, you can look at Part 1 of your notebook and see all of the various definitions or feelings you wrote about the most, and which areas you wrote about the least. **If you wrote about a certain ability more than others, it is a sign that you have revealed it more in your life.** It is very possible that if you are making more use of a certain ability, it is one of your stronger abilities, relatively speaking. Write down that ability in the column labeled “Strong” (or in the column labeled 10). Correspondingly, the less you wrote about a certain ability, it is a sign that you haven’t yet revealed this particular ability that much in your life.

However, the drawback with this approach is that one isn’t clarifying the personal connection that he has to list these very abilities of the soul which he is trying to give order to, and he is merely coming up with a logical calculation of “A certain ability I wrote about more, a certain ability I wrote about less.” There may even be several different reasons why a person wrote more about a certain ability (or any aspect of the soul) than other abilities (or soul-aspects). Therefore, it’s not certain if the ability is stronger or weaker, just because a person wrote about it a lot or not.

For this reason, it is recommended to list all of our soul-capabilities by also using several other ‘yardsticks’ which we shall now explain, each of them being a different method on how to determine the **quality and intensity** of a particular soul-capability, and by using as many of these tools as possible, we can gain a more encompassing view on our personal soul. Then we can have a clearer and more accurate picture of ourselves – knowing our strongest abilities (and in particular, knowing our very strongest ability) not merely by noticing how often we are using these abilities, but by seeing the greater impact that these abilities have in our life.

FIVE WAYS TO MEASURE THE QUALITY OF YOUR ABILITIES

We will now explain these five ‘yardsticks’ of how we can measure the quality or intensity of a particular ability, and these will be tools to help us be clearer about our soul-capabilities – that is, when we think about the personal connection that we have to any of our abilities. Briefly, these measuring yardsticks are:

(1) If you are very **connected** to a certain ability. (2) If you see that you get a lot of **stability in your life** from a certain ability. (3) If you can **feel a deep connection** to a particular ability. (4) If you are very **clear** about a certain ability. (5) If you can **perceive subtler aspects** about a certain ability.

These measuring ‘yardsticks’ can help us identify more inner layers of ourselves, giving us different perspectives, different angles of understanding about our own soul-capabilities. For that reason, **it is possible that if a person uses one of these yardsticks, he will identify a certain ability as his strongest ability – while using a different yardstick will point to a different ability as his strongest.** Yet, that shouldn’t deter us, in spite of the confusion that this may cause, because that is precisely the goal here – **to clarify our different soul-capabilities from the vantage point of several different layers of our soul.** At each additional layer of the soul that we get into, we can reveal new understandings about ourselves, which is clearer and more accurate than the view we saw from the previous layer.

YARDSTICK 2 – HOW CONNECTED ARE YOU TO A CERTAIN ABILITY?

The second ‘yardstick’ we can use to figure out how strong or weak our particular soul-capabilities are – which will measure the quality of the intensity of the ability in question – is by seeing: **How connected are we to a certain ability?**

There are varying levels of personal connection that we have to each of our abilities. With one ability, we will **feel a stronger connection** to it, and with another ability, we feel less connected with it. We can **identify more**

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with a certain ability – we can **“feel” it more** - while we identify less with a different ability, and we don’t “feel” it as much.

For example, a person will say, “The ability that I feel most connected to is, being orderly and organized. By me, everything has to be organized. My home and workplace has to be neat and organized where you can find everything. My thoughts are very focused and organized and not flying all over the place.

“But the ability I feel less connected to is, the ability of moving on (the soul’s power to “destroy” a previous level). I do not feel such a constant push to be able to let go of a certain thing so that I can grow to a higher level.”

Another person will say, “The ability I feel most connected is, the ability of giving. All the time, I feel a burning desire to always look for ways of how I can be of help to someone.

“But the ability that I feel the least connected to is, the ability of setting boundaries. I just can’t restrain myself from helping people. I don’t think that it’s right to withhold kindness from others in order to take care of my own needs.”

The idea is that when we are making a list of our different abilities, we should identify which abilities we feel a greater connection to, and which abilities we feel the least connected with.¹

By using this ‘yardstick’, we can now apply either method of listing our abilities in order of their dominance (using any of the charts we made earlier, in which we listed all our abilities)² and then we can begin to analyze all the abilities again, using this current yardstick: Seeing how connected (or not connected) we feel to each of the abilities listed.

¹ It should be emphasized that we need to be identifying which of our abilities we are actually connected with – and not an ability which we would like to be connected with.

² As explained in Chapter 10

YARDSTICK 3 – HOW STABLE & CONSISTENT IS A PARTICULAR ABILITY?

A third yardstick (and which is another method that measures the quality of a particular ability), which we can use in order to clarify if a certain ability is stronger or weaker, is by seeing: **How much stability does a certain ability provide us with?**

The degree of stability which we get from each of our abilities varies, depending on the particular ability. One ability will provide us with more stability in our lives, while a different ability does not do that for us.

For example, one person may say, “For me, it is love that provides more stability in my life. I feel that Hashem’s love for me enables me to feel stable, to feel like I’m solidly anchored to something real.

“However, when I aspire for a certain ambition I have, I find that it shakes up all my internal stability and makes me uneasy. Every time I feel an aspiration or wish for something, I feel like I lose control and it brings me into a very unpleasant state.”

A second person may say, “For me, leading others is what provides me with stability in my life. When I am leading a group of people and it’s working, I feel mighty.

“But there’s something that shakes up my stability a lot, and that’s when I have to take things from people. When I feel like I’m on the receiving end and I need to receive something from another, my self-worth gets lowered and I feel weaker about myself, making me lose my sense of stability.”

Thus, the idea is that when we are listing our abilities, we should identify which abilities give us more stability, and which abilities provide us with less stability (and which abilities shake up our stability and weaken it). Using this ‘yardstick’ – of seeing how stable a certain ability makes us, and vice versa- we can now go back to any of the charts we made in which we listed all our abilities, and now try to see better which abilities are stronger or weaker.

NEXT WEEK CONTINUING: FINDING YOUR QUALITIES