



Knowing How To “Advance and Retreat”

Water-of-fire-of-fire, with regards to honor, is when a person is getting pleasure out of connecting to anything that's above his true level. When used in the right way, one rises to a higher level, a higher world, and then he knows how to go back to his normal level. This is called the concept of *ratzu v'shov*, “running and retreating”, the cycle of going higher and then going back down. When one is in the midst of *ratzu* (running) he is trying to rise to a higher level, a higher world than the one he is in now, and that is like the beginning of *chassidus* – where he gets pleasure in the process.

Honoring Shabbos

In the example of honor, one is enjoying the fact that he is now found at a world that's higher than his current level.

As an example of this, one is obligated to both honor Shabbos and have a spiritual pleasure in Shabbos (and there are many aspects of these two different *halachos*). What is the depth of honoring Shabbos? On Shabbos, every Jew has risen to a higher level than where he normally is during the week. In the past, even those who were ignorant of Torah and who weren't careful about being honest would still be afraid to utter any kind of falsity on Shabbos. During the weekday the person wasn't careful about lying, but on Shabbos he could not bring himself to lie. Was this because every person rises to a higher level on Shabbos, or is it because a person receives levels on Shabbos that are beyond his current level? It is clear that on Shabbos, every Jew receives certain spiritual illumination that's above his current level [enabling him to temporarily be on a higher spiritual level].

Thus when one honors Shabbos, he is connecting to Shabbos and rising to a world that's above his current level. (The hidden area of Torah teaches that on Shabbos, all of the spiritual “worlds” ascend three levels higher. This is the depth behind honoring Shabbos and also the pleasure that can have in Shabbos).

We fulfill the obligation to have pleasure on Shabbos through

dining with food and beverages, but there is also an obligation to honor Shabbos, and that is by wearing special Shabbos clothes. But wearing Shabbos clothes is also a way of deriving pleasure in the honor accorded to Shabbos – why? One has pleasure in Shabbos, because on Shabbos he is found at this higher world that is Shabbos, in which he has risen above his normal level. That's honor – the very fact that his soul has risen higher than one's current level is a great “honor” for the soul.

The *Gra* and others write that “Constant pleasure is not pleasure”. Pleasure is always whenever one moves from one state to another, not when one stays where he is. The word *oneg* contains the word *na* (move) followed by the letter *gimmel* (equal to 3, the number of *chazakah*, establishing any kind of given status) which hints that one keeps being in movement, which gives pleasure. The soul's inner pleasure is when can rise above his current level and then return to his normal level – when he is following the process of *ratzu v'shov*, advancing higher and then retreating back down. The *Sefer HaYashar* of Rabbeinu Tam calls these two modes “days of love” and “days of hate” (periods of growth and aspiration, versus periods of descent and stagnation). Pleasure is experienced when one rises above his current level and then goes back down to his normal level. This is really the pleasure of *oneg Shabbos*.

Currently we are able to derive pleasure in Shabbos, but in the future, will we have pleasure in Shabbos? When compared to our current dimension, the answer is to this is No. Why? This is because it's only in our current dimension in which we have a Motzei Shabbos, which puts an end to Shabbos and enables us to have pleasure in Shabbos the next time it comes. But in the future which will be a “day that is entirely Shabbos and eternal serenity”, there will be constant serenity, and the rule is that “constant pleasure is not pleasure”, so there won't be pleasure in Shabbos [it will be serene, not pleasurable]. Currently we can get pleasure in Shabbos precisely because we do not have a constant Shabbos, and it is the division between the weekday and Shabbos which is what allows us to enjoy Shabbos when it comes, where we rise to a higher world than the weekday.

The obligation of *oneg Shabbos* is learned from the verse, “And

you shall call upon Shabbos pleasure”, meaning that Shabbos has to be called to in order to come to us, where we connect to a level that’s beyond us right now. Thus, the pleasure in Shabbos, which is to connect to a higher level, is an example of the honor that comes from “water-of-fire-of-fire”.

On Shabbos, it is forbidden to do any of the 39 forms of work, and the Sages derived all of these laws from the verse “Do not light a fire in all of your dwellings, on the day of Shabbos”, and the depth of this is that Shabbos is a time when “fire” is revealed. The pleasure in Shabbos is therefore in the fire of Shabbos, but not the impaired kind of fire (which is the fire that we cannot light on Shabbos) but to the repaired fire. It is fire-of-fire specifically by which we can attain honor of Shabbos, and when one honors Shabbos (with special food, drink, and clothes) he is both deriving pleasure in, and giving honor, to Shabbos.

Shabbos is the clear example of water-of-fire-of-fire. In our souls, we access this perspective when we connect to a world or level that’s beyond our current one. But Shabbos is followed by the six days of the week, when we return to our normal level, and then we rise again on the following Shabbos, repeating the cycle. This shows us how to properly use the concept of water-of-fire-of-fire.

Properly Using Water-of-Fire-of-Fire

As explained, the improper use of water-of-fire-of-fire is when one connects to “a world that is not his” and he gets pleasure from this. The problem here is that the person is just reveling in a fantasy, an improper use of fire. But when one uses water-of-fire-of-fire properly, he connects to a world that’s above him because he wants to rise to a higher level and then he understands that he has to become back down to his normal level. This is the concept of *ratzu v’shov* – running and returning. This is also the depth of how to have true pleasure in Shabbos.

Using Limitations To Restrict Water-of-Fire-of-Fire

How can one relate better to this concept of going to a higher level and then coming back down? We can see that Shabbos has boundaries that one has to stay in: “*A man should not go out from his place on the day of Shabbos.*” One is allowed to walk around within the space of his own four cubits, and he is allowed to walk as much as he wants within any private property on Shabbos, but all of this movement is still staying

within the place where he is – he is staying within his “world”.

This is actually a use of “earth”-of-fire-of-fire, because he is limiting his movements. Without having any bounds of where to move around to, one will end up imagining that he can rise to higher worlds that he should not be approaching at all because they are way beyond him. With earth-of-fire-of-fire though, one places earth (limitations) on his fire-of-fire (ascent to higher levels) and keeps himself restrained. Shabbos is about keeping to boundaries, and when one does so, he can properly enjoy Shabbos – the “water” of fire-of-fire.

In Conclusion

In summary, we have seen how water-of-fire-of-fire is used either improperly [seeking the pleasure that comes from the honor of enjoying a higher level that isn’t suitable for one’s current level, which is really enjoying a fantasy] as well as the proper use of water-of-fire-of-fire (and an example of this was the pleasure in Shabbos).

The proper way to use water-of-fire-of-fire, as explained, is that after one has gotten pleasure from being on a higher level than where he normally is, he makes sure afterwards to return to his normal level.

A person can only properly enjoy Shabbos [and any ascent to a higher level] if he can be “a wise person recognizes his place”, when he understands that he has to keep returning to his normal level [even after he has experienced a quick or out-of-the-ordinary spiritual ascent]. Then he will be able to properly enjoy rising to a higher level, now that he is using the power of boundaries – which places “earth” on his fire-of-fire.

So it is knowing how to make use of earth-of-fire-of-fire that enables one to have true pleasure when he rises to a higher level, where he can then enjoy the honorable level that he is connecting to and he is not fooling himself with fake, imagined honor. Rather, he will know how to truly revel in the pleasures of giving honor to that which is above him (honoring parents, Torah teachers, honoring the Torah, and above all, honoring Hashem), and his pleasure will be real.

That is the depth, and the true pleasure and honor for the soul, which awaits one who knows how to properly use the power of water-of-fire-of-fire.

NEXT WEEK HEBREW SHIUR/LAKEWOOD 2022
דע את מידותיך והדרכה מעשית אש כבוד 015 דוח דאש דאש

The Ups & Downs Of Our History יתברך שמך מלכינו תמיד לעולם ועד – “May Your Name be blessed, our King, constantly, and forever.” We pray here that the Name of Hashem become constant and forever. Hashem created the world in a way that we are always going through ups and downs. The world is like this in general, and on a more specific level, this process affects *Klal Yisrael*. Thus every Jew has times of spiritual ascent and times of descent.

There were two times in history when we reached the apex of perfection, but they didn't last for long. One time was when we stood at Har Sinai and we received the Torah, where we were cleansed from the effects of the Snake on mankind that had entered us since Adam's sin. From the time of Shavuot until the sin of the Golden Calf, we were on a perfected level. Another time where we had spiritual elevation, although not as perfect as the level of standing at Har Sinai, was the time when the Beis HaMikdash was built, where we had the *Shechinah* amongst us. But it didn't last for more than 420 years. It was destroyed due to the three cardinal sins which were rampant then.

So although we had our times of elevation, it did not last forever. We were not able to exalt the name of Hashem “constantly and forever” as we say here in *Shemoneh Esrei*. Only in the future will Hashem's name be exalted forever. In our current times, Amalek is still present, and its evil does not allow Hashem's name to be forever. Until the future, we have to go through an ongoing cycle of spiritual ups and downs.

In times of spiritual ascent, a person feels inspired and he is able to exalt Hashem's name, and when a person is going through a period of descent, he will not always have the strength to exalt Hashem's name, *chas v'shalom*. This is true on the general scale of *Klal Yisrael*, as well as on a personal scale, of each soul in *Klal Yisrael*.

Upward Movement & Downward Movement Creation consists of movements – there is either upward movement (*aliyah*), or there is downward movement (*yeridah*). When one has yearnings for *d'veykus* in Hashem and he is of the *bnei aliyah* (those who ascend spiritually), he wishes to attach himself to his Source. This is the ‘upward’ kind of movement in Creation. The other kind of movement in Creation is downward movement. It can be a kind of movement that causes rectification, or it can be a movement that is detrimental to the person.

However, we also find a concept of kind of downward movement is reparative. The Sages said that Hashem desired to have a dwelling on this world. This is a ‘descent’ on Hash-

em's part, because He is descending from Heaven to come onto this lowly world. This kind of descent, obviously, is a reparative kind of descent.

Thus, one has the personal *avodah* to reveal Hashem through desiring to ascend, higher and higher in spiritual attainments, until he can finally reach the most desired level, which is to reach Hashem Himself. But a person also has an *avodah* to sometimes ‘descend’, in order to resemble Hashem's holy attribute of descending.

An example of this is that a *Rebbi* must descend from his level in order to teach his student, and a father must descend from his level in order to teach his son. Similarly, *Chazal* said that it is greater for one to greet guests than to greet the *Shechinah*, and we learn this from Avraham Avinu, who left the *Shechinah* in order to be run after guests. This is a kind of descent from one's level in which one resembles Hashem's own nature to descend from His loftiness and dwell on this world.

‘Nefilah’: Times Of Falling But there is also a kind of ‘descent’ which does not rectify others. This is a kind of descent in which a person falls from his level, and it is not resembling Hashem's nature of holy descent. Most of the time in which a person falls from his level, it is a kind of *yeridah* (descent) that is a *nefilah* (fall).

However, we must know that *yeridah* at its root is holy. It is just that it doesn't always manifest itself in our life for holiness. But we can definitely turn a *yeridah* into a period of holiness. Therefore, one must know that when he is going through a *yeridah*, it is also a time where he can also “exalt Hashem's name.”

During a time of ascent, one feels exalted and thus it is easier to exalt Hashem's name. He is pulled after Hashem like a magnet after a magnet, as the *Mesillas Yesharim* writes. When we go through a period of descent, where we are not inspired like this, we must understand that the very concept of descent is not a bad thing in essence.

We all recognize many times in our life in which we are going through a *yeridah*. But they can be times where we reveal Hashem's name through them. If we were to only exalt Hashem's name during times of spiritual ascent, then it would not be a ‘constant’ exaltation of Hashem's name, for it would only be limited to times where we are ascending. But if we exalt Hashem's name even as we are going through a descent, that shows that we are *always* exalting Hashem's name, and this fulfills the meaning of יתרום ותינשא שמך תמיד לעולם ועד.

UPS & DOWNS

What To Do During A Time Of Descent This issue is, however: What is the *avodah* of a person when he finds himself in a *yeridah*? Obviously, the first thing he has to do is to see how he can come out of it. He needs to muster the strength and pull himself together, doing what he can to come out of it. That part is obvious. But what we want to know is, in addition to knowing that we need to come out of a *yeridah*, now that we *are* going through a *yeridah*, the question is: what to do in this situation.

What is the *avodah* of a person when he's going through a *yeridah*, and he's trying to come out of it but he sees that he can't? He doesn't have the *yishuv hadaas* (settled mind) to pull himself out, or it's because the external situation is not allowing it. What now should he do?

One part of the *avodah*, as is well-known, is to hold onto certain points from his period of growth, that he can still keep to, so that he will be able to look towards growth and come out of the *yeridah*. In order to rise above his situation, he would need a lot of *yishuv hadaas* (settled mind) and *menuchas hanefesh* (inner serenity). He doesn't have this, so he needs to find certain areas that he still keeps growing in, even as he's going through a *yeridah*.

In this way, Hashem's name is 'constantly' exalted. It is easy to exalt Hashem's name when we are full of inspiration and we are like a fire that keeps ascending to Heaven; when we are like "*a constant fire that burns on the Altar, it does not extinguish.*" Fire is "*aish*," which has the same letters as the word *yeiush* (despair); when a person falls from his level, he might *chas v'shalom* fall into despair, where his inner fire is extinguished.

But when a person understands that our *avodah* consists of ups and downs, and that we can reveal Hashem even through times of descent, it becomes easier to survive the dismal periods. The main part of our *avodah* is of course when we ascend higher and higher to Hashem and we are serving Him as we are supposed to, but when the times of descent do arrive, they are also important times in our *avodah* of revealing Hashem.

Rabbeinu Tam¹ wrote that even in times of descent, we can hold onto certain points of our growth, which will make us feel positive and thus be enabled to get by the dismal period. This way, he won't fall any more than he's already falling. Here we've described a different facet of understanding to the concept of Rabbeinu Tam: in addition to doing what he can to come out of his *yeridah*, one can know that he needs to serve Hashem precisely in his state of *yeridah*. It is not just about preventing any further descent from his level. It is about serv-

ing Hashem even as a person is amidst a *yeridah*.

This is what truly exalts Hashem's name. In this way, he raises the situation of his *yeridah* and exalts Hashem's name there. The *yeridah* becomes 'exalted' in this way, as it enables the person to exalt Hashem's name even as he's going through the *yeridah*. Not only does he look to reveal Hashem in his situation; he exalts the situation from what it used to be.

One has to discern the areas of *yeridah* in his life. It is easy for us to discern if we are going through a major *yeridah*, but there are also small areas of *yeridah*, which can be manifest even as a person is in a state of general spiritual ascent.

In Summary The *avodah* of a person of surviving a *yeridah* really begins before the person goes through a *yeridah*. The first thing one must figure out is how a *yeridah* can be a situation of growth. This needs to be done while one is in a time of growth, and he must not wait until he falls in order to think about this. He must strive to avoid a situation of *yeridah*, of course.

But after one finds himself in a situation of *yeridah*, he must see how he can come out of it, seeing what he can do to do about it, and if there's any possibility of pulling himself out of it, as much as the situation allows. In addition to this, he must also turn it into a holy kind of *yeridah*, according to the perspective that was explained here: he must understand that a time of *yeridah* is also a time in which we can exalt Hashem's name.

In Conclusion Acquiring this perspective enables a person to reach a level of inner redemption to his soul; "*My soul is close to her redemption.*"

In the future, when Amalek will be erased, Hashem's name will be revealed on this world, for there will be no more *yeridos* anymore. There will only be constant and eternal ascension. As we live now, where Amalek is still present, the Sages said that "Hashem's name is incomplete and His Throne is incomplete"; so His complete Name cannot be fully revealed on this world in our current state. But if a person learns how to serve his Creator both through his ups and downs, he can exalt Hashem's name in either situation – תמיד לעולם ועד.

Even if one were to descend to the lowest possible levels, to the depths of *She'ol* (the abysses of spiritual impurity), he can still reveal Hashem there and thereby cause Hashem's name to be exalted there, and in this way, he is exalting Hashem's name precisely in this lowly world. He will merit to be of the *b'nei aliyah* (those who ascend spiritually)², of whom there are few of.

¹ Sefer HaYashar (authored by Rabbeinu Tam); see also Alei Shur, Vol. I, p.34

² Bava Metzia 45a