



ROOT OF HONORING EVERY PERSON

Honor-seeking comes from the soul's element of fire, which seeks to rise higher. Fire-of-fire is the soul's ascent to beyond one's current level – not merely a desire to rise higher, but to become connected to a higher level. It is written, “Who will ascend the mount of Hashem and who will stand in His holy place?” There is an ascent to a higher spiritual level, and then there is the ability to become connected to there and to stay there.

Wind – A Unifying Element

The element of wind is all about movement, and wind is also the root of all the elements. Chazal said that the first element Hashem made was the element of air (wind). Wind also gets the other elements moving, and wind is the element that moves all of Creation.

Another unique aspect about wind which the other three elements don't have is that wind comes in many different forms.

The earth is all one. The Gemara says that when one does something on one part of the ground, for example if he makes an acquirement on that part of the ground, it counts for the other side of the ground as well that's far away, because the ground of the earth is all one long connected piece. Water is also one. The waters of the world were originally one body of water and later Hashem divided it into two bodies of water, which became further divided into oceans, rivers, streams, and springs. But in essence, all of the water of the world was one unit. Fire will turn anything it meets into fire, turning everything all into one fire.

But wind has four different directions to it, and the Gemara explains how each of the four winds does something else. There are also upper winds and lower winds, in addition to the four different directions of wind in the world. Thus, the element of wind divided into the different winds of the world. Each wind will do something else.

Wind in the soul is the ability to guide all of the different winds – all of the different ways – which people have. Moshe Rabbeinu said that “Hashem will choose a man over the congregation, a man of spirit”, and Rashi says, “A man of spirit is one who knows how to go with each man's spirit.” Shlomo HaMelech says, “Who can know the spirits of people?” Each person is different, so it is a gift to know how to guide each person when every person thinks so differently from one another.

Each of the elements has an opposite element. Water descends and fire rises. But wind has four directions to it, and a man of the congregation is a person who can know the spirit of each person -this is not merely someone who knows how to deal with individual personality, but someone who knows how to connect together the different and opposite ways of thinking that people have. This takes a certain power of daas. This comes from the element of wind, which contains the fundamental power known as “integrating opposites.”

Wind is able to bring together water and fire and enables these opposite elements to work together. On this world, fire and water cannot co-exist together. Wind, which is the primary element of Heaven, has the heavenly power of combining together fire and water and enabling these opposite elements to work together.

On This World, the dominating element is earth: “You are earth, and to earth you will return.” The main element which people are drawn to on this world is – earth. The Gra writes that in Heaven, the main element is wind, while on this world the main element is earth. The way we can understand this is that ever since the sin of Adam, man has become connected to the element of earth. Man was taken from the earth and received a soul, which is the element of wind, and upon sinning and dying, the wind leaves man and he becomes connected with the earth.

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Earth, by itself, is the element that cannot unify opposites together. The earth becomes scattered into dust, it cannot unify. This is also the root of machlokes (dissension) in the world. On the second day of Creation, Gehinnom and machlokes were created.¹ But wind - which is “The spirit of our nostrils, the Mashiach of Hashem”, the “spirit of G-d that hovers over the face of the water” which is the “spirit of Mashiach”², is able to integrate opposites together.

On This World, wind is connected with earth and becomes like the earth, and that is why the winds of the world are split into four directions. But at its root above, wind is the element that combines together opposites and integrates them all together.

The terms “spirit of Shlomo”, a “man of spirit in him”, a “man of the congregation” – these are all the holy uses of wind which can integrate opposites together. What is a “man of the congregation”? A “congregation”, a group of people, will contain different faces and different ways of thinking, all different types of people who feel separate from one another, but a “man of the congregation” is above them all, and therefore he can combine all of them together. What’s separated below on this world is able to become unified above in the upper world.

Wind-of-Fire-of-Fire: Integrating Opposites Together

Honor, which comes from the element of fire, is the soul’s ability to connect to a higher dimension. “Fire-of-fire”, the essence of honor, is when one indeed connects to the higher dimension. But there are two ways of being connected to there. Either one simply becomes connected to the higher dimension (fire-of-fire), or he is connected to the place where opposites are unified (wind-of-fire-of-fire) where everything down below on the world is unified together just as it is all united in Heaven. That’s the outline and we will now explain this more with siyata d’shmaya.

Fire-of-fire, by itself, can rise above to a higher dimension, but where does it rise to? The rule is that “Everything yearns for its root.” Whenever something goes to the upper world, it goes to its root. Honor, as explained earlier, is where everything becomes combined together all at once. An ish eshko-

los, a man of talent, “a man whom everything is in”, is called a chochom, a wise person. The word eshkol stands for aish kol – a “fire that is everything” – this is not the fire of the second day of Creation which is the fire of Gehinnom and machlokes (strife)³, but a fire revealed in a “man of talent”, which is the holy use of wind-of-fire-of-fire, the power to rise higher and connect together every single way of thinking.

The Holy Use Of Wind-of-Fire-of-Fire

When there is an argument between wise people, there are rules of whom to conclude like and follow. When there is an individual against a majority, we follow the majority. By a machlokes (differing views) we have to rule like one of the views. But there is also a concept that “a yarei shomayim (Heaven-fearing individual) fulfills both views.” What is the depth of this?

Why should a person be more stringent than the halachic requirement and fulfill both views? No one is doing anything wrong if they only follow the halachic view and they don’t follow the view that differs with it, and he won’t get punished upstairs for this either. He can open up the Shulchan Aruch and say, “This is what the Taz says to do, and that is what I did.” What is this concept of a G-d fearing person who fulfills both differing views?

In Heaven, opposite elements combine. One who fears Heaven is not someone who is afraid of punishment, but someone who lives at the Heavenly plane where opposites are integrated together. He is living at a level where Heaven shines for him, where opposites are integrated. One at this level fulfills differing views in halachah. If one is not at the level of integrating opposites, and there is room for him to suspect that he may need to something halachically, he certainly should be concerned and do so, but if he has no concern, then he is not at the level of one who seeks to fulfill both views.

Having true fear of Heaven is wind-of-fire-of-fire, where a person rises higher - not just to his root above in Heaven, but to a place where he sees how opposite views of thinking can really be integrated together. This is a very deep concept.

NEXT WEEK CONTINUING HEBREW SHIUR/LAKEWOOD 2022
דע את מידותיך הדרכה מעשית אש כבוד 015 רוח דאש דאש

1 Talmud Bavli Pesachim 54a

2 Beraishis Rabbah 1:1

3 Talmud Bavli Pesachim 54a

HOW WE VIEW THE NATIONS

All of Creation Will Recognize Hashem

וְכָל הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֵלָה “**And all the living shall give thanks to You, selah.**” In this section of the *Modim* blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we say that the entire world shall express thanks to Hashem, a description of the future, in which all of Creation will recognize Hashem.

In the beginning of *Modim*, we say, “*We give thanks to You, for You are our G-d.*” We express thanks to Hashem that He is “our G-d”, which implies that we, the Jewish people, are thanking Hashem. But in the later part of the blessing of *Modim*, we say that “all the living” shall praise Hashem, which implies that the rest of Creation as well gives thanks to Hashem.

The power to express gratitude to Hashem stems from the tribe of Yehudah, whose name comes from the word *hodaah* (thanks), and his power of *hodaah* spreads from *Klal Yisrael* into the rest of the world, including the gentile nations of the world.

Rashi states that the *Shema* declares Hashem as “our G-d”, implying the G-d of the Jewish people, but in the future Hashem will be “one” over the entire world, including all the nations. In the prayer of *Aleinu* as well, we express how in the future, all the nations will recognize and know of Hashem; “*for to You every knee will bow.*” In addition, in the *tefillos* of the *Yomim Noraim*, we describe how in the future, all nations will declare Hashem as King.

The History of The Jewish People

When Hashem first created the world, He created only *Adam HaRishon*’s soul, and there were no divisions yet of a Jewish people and other nations of the world. Although the *sefarim hakodeshim* state that all souls were included in Adam’s soul, Jew and gentile alike, which implies that there was already a division from before, this division between Jews and gentiles was not yet made in the revealed reality, and it only existed as a hidden dimension¹.

In the reality before us, there was no division yet between the Jewish people and the gentiles, in the beginning of history. There was Adam, then Chavah, [then Kayin and Hevel], then Shem, and then the generation of Enosh. There still wasn’t yet a creation of a Jewish people.

Then Avraham Avinu came, a man who recognized G-d, and he spread the knowledge of Him onto the world. This began the roots of a division between a people of G-d with other nations of the worlds: Avraham was against the entire world; he was the only one

who believed in G-d, whereas the rest of the world did not believe.

In the merit of his great achievement, Avraham Avinu was told by Hashem that he will be designated to be made into a nation. He was told by Hashem to leave his homeland, to leave his wicked father Terach, which can also be understood on a deeper level as a separation from the nations of the world in order to be made into a unique nation.

The Jewish people are thus separated from the nations of the world, as they are designated by Hashem to be a separate nation and fulfill the purpose that Hashem has specially planned.

Separation From Gentiles In Place, Time, & Soul

The separation of Jews from gentiles exists not only in history, but it exists as well in the dimensions of time, place and soul as well (based on the principle of “*Olam, Shanah, Nefesh*” – everything exists in three planes: place, time, and soul).

The “time” where we are separated from gentiles is Shabbos. A gentile is not allowed to keep Shabbos, and if he does, he is liable to capital punishment. Shabbos is called the “*bris*” between the Jewish people and Hashem, so it is unique to the Jewish people and serves as a separation between the Jewish nation and the other nations.

We are separated from gentiles as well in “place”. Avraham Avinu was told to leave his homeland and birthplace and go to Eretz Yisrael. This was the division between the Jewish people and the other nations that took place in the dimension of “place”.

Ever since that division was made, it has become an inherently foreign concept for the Jewish people to mix with the other nations and live with them. And if the Jewish people become forced to be mixed among the nations of the world, it is called *galus* (exile).

Avraham went to Eretz Yisrael, but then he was told by Hashem to go down to Egypt, which was one of his ten trials. He had already been separated from the other nations and from his birthplace and father’s home, and he had reached Eretz Yisrael, a place separate from the other nations. Although he was still a “stranger” there and he didn’t yet own it, he was still separated from other nations, and therefore he faced a great test when he was told to go down to Egypt where he would have to mix with them.

Based on the rule of “*Maaseh Avos Siman L'Banim*” (“The actions of our forefathers are a sign for their children”), the fact that Avraham Avinu dwelled in Egypt was a sign that his descendants would have to endure exile, to dwell among gentiles.

¹ See *Reaching Your Essence_01_Introduction To Jewish Spirituality*

² *Covenant, treaty, or promise*

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At a later point, there were the “70 souls who went down to Egypt” (including Yaakov Avinu and his sons), which symbolizes the situation of exile, in which we are meant to separate from the gentile nations even as we are mixed amongst them. Exile is compared to a fetus in its mother’s womb, where we are forced to be ‘sustained’ from the other nations of the world, where we find ourselves mixed with them in their land.

Not only does exile causes us to mix with them in the physical sense, but it causes us to be influenced by them in the internal sense. In Egypt, we did not change our names, clothing, and language. This shows us that we have the power to remain somewhat uninfluenced by the nations even as we are mixed with them. But besides for those aspects we remained firm in, we were influenced by them, for the most part.

The depth of the exodus from Egypt was that we were made separate from the nations. We were made into Hashem’s chosen nation, and He made us separate not only the physical place that was Egypt and from Pharaoh, but He made us into our own nation, *Klal Yisrael*.

The Root of Anti-Semitism

This distinction was made absolute and complete in the days immediately preceding the event of *Shavuot*, where we stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah. The giving of the Torah clearly revealed the separation between the Jewish people and the other nations. It revealed how it *Klal Yisrael* were Hashem’s “first thoughts” in Creation.

Chazal say that at *Sinai*, there was “*sinah*” that entered the nations towards the Jewish people. The Torah made us separate from the nations; it showed that the Jewish people were Hashem’s chosen people, who are called the “*raishis*” (beginning) of Creation.

Realizing That We Are Different From Gentiles

That being the case, we must realize that we are totally separate from the gentiles. Chazal say the levels of existence are the non-living, plants, animals, people, and Jews. A Jew is an entirely unique creation, and he exists on a higher plane than other nations. Even the physical body of a Jew is sanctified, for it contains his Divine soul.³

So there is a vast difference between a Jew and a gentile. The separation of Jew from gentile is not just in the historical sense, but in the existential sense and even in the physical sense [to a certain extent].

Thus we thank Hashem for being “*our G-d*”, which refers to the designation of the Jewish people as Hashem’s chosen people, to declare Him as “*our G-d*.”

Being Strong About Your Jewish Identity

(Until now, it was described “one side of the coin”, though; soon we will explain “the other side of the coin”).

First of all, we must make sure that we are clear of the difference between the Jewish people and the other nations. We might be aware that the Torah and its *mitzvos* are only for the Jewish people, but we might still be tempted to think that the gentiles are wiser than us. After all, the Sages state the “Wisdom is found among the nations”, so we might attempt to use their wisdom to lead our lives.⁴

This comes from a lack of understanding of knowing how we are inherently different from them. We must be clear, both in our minds and hearts, that there is a distinction between the Jewish people and gentiles. Therefore, there is no basis to borrow ideas from them and to connect to their ideas. It is not only Torah and *mitzvos* which separate us from them; all aspects of our life are different from them.

This concept is more relevant than ever, in our own generation where there is so much confusion and a lack of the correct mentality. Many secular ideas have entered the Jewish people, to the point that it does not seem to many of us that we that different than them in our approach to life.

In the countries of the world outside of Eretz Yisrael (*chutz l'aretz*), Jews live amongst gentiles, which greatly influences them. But even in Eretz Yisrael, there are many gentile nations who have come here, dwelling with us in the physical sense as well as influencing how we think and live life.

When a Jew is clearly aware of the holiness of his soul, though, he is aware that there is a vast separation between a Jew’s soul and gentile’s soul, and he does not come to make the mistake of connecting to their ideologies about life.

NEXT WEEK CONTINUING HEBREW SHIUR/JERUSALEM 2022
תפילה 162 וכל החיים יודוך יחס לאור ה'

3 See Chasam Sofer to Shabbos 86b

4 See Tefillah #042 – What It Means To Have Good Middos; see also Tefillah #094 – Seeking Advice; and Chanukah_ Light of Emunah.