



DEPTH OF HONOR

Thus, the depth of honor is to reveal the inner dimension. The *Nefesh HaChaim* explains how on one hand, we have to believe that from Hashem's perspective, there is nothing but Him, everything is simply *Ain Od Milvado*, but at the same time we also have to believe in our perspective which is that He looked into the Torah to create the world with all the laws of the Torah, and if a person only believes in Hashem's perspective and disregards Creation then he is *chas v'shalom* destroying all the laws of the Torah and he will make grievous errors. We must believe in both sides of the coin. From Hashem's perspective, honor is fire-of-fire-of-fire, but from our perspective, we have to do the avodah that corresponds to wind-of-fire-of-fire which is to integrate together all possibilities.

When we consider this contradiction, there can't be a greater contradiction of two opposite concepts from each other. On one hand we have to define everything as one single reality, *Ain Od Milvado*, with no other possibility. Yet there is also the opposite view we need to have, which is that there are countless details and possibilities that we need to integrate together, all 600,000 souls of the Jewish people.

Wind-of-fire-of-fire is the power to include together every possibility and detail and integrate them together, while fire-of-fire-of-fire means that there's only one reality. Honor is complete when we combine together the opposing views of wind and fire – when on one hand we are aware of *Ain Od Milvado* yet at the same time we also combine together every possibility, and when we know that both views are true. That is the deep honor that we can rise with from Creation.

The root of integrating all opposites is fire-of-fire-of-fire, which is the root that *Ain Od Milvado* can be revealed even down below. The root of integrating all opposites is when we can combine fire-of-fire-of-fire

(*Ain Od Milvado*) with wind-of-fire-of-fire (integrating together every possibility) and revealing how both of them can be true at the same time. That is the complete honor that emerges from Creation, and there can be no greater revelation of honor than this.

It's not that these are two different possibilities. Rather, Hashem is able to want it one way or the other way. Hashem reveals Himself in two opposite ways, and that is why He is called "The King, Whom all honor belongs to." His honor is that the two most absolute extremes from each other can be combined together as He wills. One extreme is wind-of-fire-of-fire, which is to admit to the many different details that exist at the root where all details come from – all the many differing views, all contained in one root. This is not yet the root of all opposites, because the root of all opposites is at the other extreme, fire-of-fire-of-fire. Hashem can will to contract Himself and allow for the creations to exist, and He can also will for nothing but His existence. Both views are true, and that is the root of all opposites (fire-of-fire-of-fire) as well as the integration of all opposites (wind-of-fire-of-fire). This is the true honor that emerges from Creation.

The complete honor in Creation becomes revealed when we have the combination of wind-of-fire-of-fire (integration of opposites) with fire-of-fire-of-fire (the root of opposites). The most that the creations are capable of is to integrate together all opposites. Though a person can integrate opposites together, no human being can integrate together the ultimate contradiction that exists (the contradiction between the Creator's Reality in which only He exists, versus the reality of the creations), and only Hashem can hold this contradiction, because He can will either of these two extremes. This is the depth of why Hashem is called "King of honor", the King whom all honor belongs to.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: In terms of our soul, what is the impaired use of “fire of fire of fire”?

A: Sodom was punished with fire because their souls were rooted in fire, as the Gra and others explain, and the evil of Sodom, fire-of-fire-of-fire, when they cut off everyone’s hands and feet in order to make the person fit into the bed, is the evil of forcing everyone in the world into being the same type of person. That evil of Sodom was the evil use of fire-of-fire-of-fire, the twisted use of the power to “equalize” everything.

Q: It seems that if a person only uses fire of fire of fire, this is the literal meaning of *Ain Od Milvado* (there is nothing besides Hashem), which the *Nefesh HaChaim* warns about that a person has to be careful about using – how then can a person avoid this problem?

A: Correct, the *Nefesh HaChaim*’s warning is clearly about misusing the power of fire-of-fire-of-fire (*Ain Od Milvado*), because if a person only uses *Ain Od Milvado* but he doesn’t use wind-of-fire-of-fire then he will fall into fantasies, and he will end up transgressing the whole Torah as the *Nefesh HaChaim* explains. That’s why a person also needs to develop strongly his power of wind of fire of fire, the power to integrate together all details, which a person only gets from learning Torah. A person cannot use fire of fire of fire correctly unless he first is using wind of fire of fire. Using fire of fire of fire, or *Ain Od Milvado* in the literal sense – without coupling this with learning Torah – is the root that leads to all destruction. The more Torah learning one has (and amassing Torah knowledge and being able to harmonize opposite views together), the better he can hold the power of *Ain Od Milvado*.

Q: Is this all referring to fire of fire of fire in the *Nefesh Elohis* (G-dly soul) or even in the *nefesh habehaimis* (animal soul)?

A: Very good question. Fire of fire of fire in the *nefesh habehaimis* is the evil ability to be like the Serpent who breaks all boundaries, when a person doesn’t want to listen to any kind of rules and doesn’t want to have any limits.

Q: The evil of Sodom which is to make everything into one unit. Since Sodom is identified as the 50th gate of

impurity how do we see Sodom manifest right now in Creation when the 50th gate of impurity is rampant?

A: Currently it’s only hidden and not revealed, but on a hidden level it exists in the one device that’s trying to unify all of Creation underneath it and turn everyone into one unit within it.

Q: How can one use properly fire of fire of fire and not misuse it?

A: By first using the power of earth-of-fire-of-fire, which is the power to make bounds and limitations, and the way to develop proper earth is through *dikduk hadin* (being careful with *halachah*). Without *dikduk hadin*, a person who learns about *Ain Od Milvado* in *Nefesh HaChaim Shaar III* is in a lot of danger. Only after he is keeping Torah very well, he has developed his earth and then he will be protected, and he can then have *yirah*, which is fire. One has to first keep the Torah, and then one can develop *yirah* only after he has the basis.

Q: Chazal (Sotah 49b) teach that in the era before Mashiach we will have nothing to rely on other than our Father in Heaven, so it sounds like the *avodah* in the End of Days is to concentrate on *Ain Od Milvado*, but clearly we also have to emphasize that thinking *Ain Od Milvado* won’t be enough, we also need to be careful with keeping the *mitzvos*.

A: One of the commentaries on that Gemara points out that this is one of the “curses” about the end of days listed in the Mishnah (Sotah 49a), and this is because if a person only uses *Ain Od Milvado* and doesn’t keep *mitzvos* then he is in huge danger.

Q: What should be one’s basis that he starts with – should he first start learning *halachah* and keeping it, or does he need to start with learning Torah in-depth?

A: One has to first be keeping *halachah*, and after that he has to build himself further by learning Torah in-depth.

Q: Is the warning of the *Nefesh HaChaim* about the dangers of entering into the literal meaning of *Ain Od Milvado* also for those with a soul-root to start from above?

A: Very good question. They are certainly in a lot of danger because if they aren’t careful with *halachah* then they have nothing safe to base themselves on.

THE INNER REDEMPTION

FUTURE REDEMPTION ROOT – NULLIFYING YOUR EGO

The power of the future redemption is essentially the ability to leave the selfish “I” in a person. As long as a person is still egotistical, there is a divide between a person and Hashem. When a person still has his ego, he has only his daas, and each person’s daas is different...this is the depth of Chazal that “Just as all faces are different, so are all minds different.” A person’s self-absorption prevents the revelation of achdus.

We need to acquire the higher daas. This is called “Keil de’os (*G-d of knowledge*”, an expression used by the Rambam). This is not regular daas of a person; it is a higher kind of daas that is hidden from us. It is the kind of daas which unifies the many varying opinions of people, the many different kind of daas that everyone has.

In the redemption from Egypt, even though it was a redemption to our daas, it was only a redemption to each person’s private daas. We are still different toward each other, because we each have our own opinions. It wasn’t yet a total redemption.

There are two ways how we can see this. First of all, Moshe Rabbeinu was afraid that the people wouldn’t be worthy of being redeemed, because of the wicked individuals present. This was already a lapse in the unity of the Jewish people. In addition to this, even when they were redeemed, the Erev Rav (*“Mixed Multitude”, Egyptian non-Jews who escaped Egypt together with the Jewish people*) came with them, which affected the unity of the Jewish people.

The future redemption, though, will be a total redemption to our daas. It will be a nullification of our daas and in its place a revelation of the higher Daas, the Daas of the Creator. The revelation of Hashem by the redemption will be a revelation of the achdus of the Jewish people.

This we have two missions on Pesach: we must feel as if we are leaving Egypt now, to receive a new vitality in our feelings. But this isn’t enough. Even with renewed feelings, our perspective can still be very limited. Feelings without a developed mind can be imbalanced; feelings aren’t everything. Some people are so zealous that they go overboard with their zealousness. We must realize that our feelings are only a “garment” on our soul. Our feelings alone aren’t everything – they need to be fused with an expanded mind.

For example, the mitzvah of ahavas Yisrael is to love wicked people as well. One of the four sons is a wicked son; we must

still love him as a son, even though he is wicked. In the future redemption, all the dispersed members of our people will be gathered together, even the wicked members. Although in Egypt, “had the wicked son been there, he wouldn’t have been redeemed”, still, in the future redemption, which is a more complete redemption, the wicked will be included.

This kind of feeling is a feeling expanded by the mind. This is the gadlus hamochin contained on Pesach.

“NOW WE ARE SLAVES, NEXT YEAR WE WILL BE FREE”

We need both kinds of redemption: the past redemption of Egypt (*which we already experienced*), and the future redemption. These are two different kinds of redemption.

The previous redemption, the redemption from Egypt, is a light that we must return to each year on Pesach. The future redemption is something else: we must draw it closer to us and extend it upon us even now.

In the beginning of the Hagadah, we say “Now we are slaves, Next year we will be free.” These are the beginning words of the Hagadah, and they are the preface to what is upon us on the night of Pesach.

In these words we mention two things. We mention the “bread of suffering” which our ancestors ate in Egypt, yet we also mention the future redemption – “Next year we will be free.” This is not just a yearning for the redemption (*which is also a wonderful thing to aspire to*), but it is a connection to the redemption. If we only consider the light of the redemption to be a thing of the past, then the purpose of the festival remains concealed.

The redemption hasn’t yet come; thus, the avodah we have on this Pesach is to awaken in us the inner meaning of the redemption – the higher aspect of the redemption, not the lower aspect of the redemption. We need both aspects, but the point is that we need the higher aspect of the redemption as well.

INSPIRATION LASTS ONLY IF WE EXPAND OUR MIND

Upon understanding these words, we can look at the inner depth of the avodah upon us, in a new light. There is a deep point hidden here.

Every year, the holy Jewish people want to be awakened and inspired. People hear inspiring lectures – each to his own. Everyone wants to awaken in his soul a feel for the holiness of the Yom Tov. But we must know that many times we just have “in-

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spiration” (*hisorerus*) and after some time, our inspiration wanes and we just go back to usual.

What is the mistake that people are making? It has to do with what we have been saying until now: feelings, without the mind to guide them, are only half the equation. Even if we redeem our “feelings” and we are full of renewed feelings for holiness, without expanding our mind the feelings won’t last. It’s only “half” the redemption.

If all we do is open up our feelings, without expanding our mind – then we only have the first kind of redemption, a redemption from Egypt. We will be missing our current redemption. With just feelings and no mind, the inspiration we get doesn’t last.

We will be able to connect to the redemption from Egypt with our renewed feelings of love and fear of Hashem, but after that our inspiration will go away, and we will just be left with the remaining exiles that came after Egypt....

In order for our inspiration to last, we need an expanded mind. On the night of Pesach, one is obligated to “see” himself as if he’s leaving Egypt. What does it mean to “see” yourself leaving Egypt? Are we supposed to become deluded by our imagination?! We can understand that all our souls were there one time in Egypt, but why must we see ourselves actually leaving Egypt now?

The answer to this is part of our discussion. The other part of our redemption is to redeem our power of vision in the mind. We need to be able to “see.” This halachah, that one must see himself leaving Egypt, contains the higher aspect of the redemption: to redeem one’s vision of the mind.

The depth of this is that if a person hasn’t nullified his ego and he doesn’t integrate himself with the Jewish people, then he doesn’t know how to “see.” He doesn’t have a vision of *achdus*. His redemption has nothing to do with Hashem – it’s all about redeeming himself. When a person remains absorbed in himself, he might have wonderful feelings for Avodas Hashem, but he actually might be on a very low level. Reb Yisrael Salanter’s words are famous – a person can be so afraid of the yom hadin (*day of judgment*), yet he damages others when they see a scowl on his face.

When a person only seeks to have great feelings in Avodas Hashem, it doesn’t mean yet that he is pure. It’s possible that he is self-absorbed in himself as he seeks to gain high levels in Avodas Hashem. He is so self-absorbed about his personal

growth that he doesn’t even see one person next to him! Even when such a person tells about the story of the exodus to his household, he’s wrapped up in his own self as he seeks high levels to be on. Such a person is sorely mistaken in the purpose of the festival.

When a person doesn’t realize that the main part of the redemption is to be redeemed from one’s selfish ego, he is missing the whole redemption. He might love and fear Hashem and have all the great feelings that one can reach, but it’s all another way of being self-absorbed. This is not a true redemption. The true redemption to have on Pesach is when one nullifies his self and integrates into the Jewish people, as a part of a whole.

When one considers the redemption of Pesach to be about himself, he only redeems “himself.” We cannot call this a redemption. The purpose of the redemption is that all should recognize Hashem; it is about revealing Hashem, not about revealing one’s “I.”

The way to redeem yourself on Pesach is actually be nullifying yourself. When a person is locked up in a jail, he desires to escape it – he wants his “I” to escape it. His escape from it will just be all about how he worries for himself. But the depth to the redemption is to leave your very self and forget about yourself.

This is really the depth of Ahavas Yisrael, which is the secret of the final redemption. Ahavas Yisrael is really when your soul has a redemption – when you leave yourself!! In other words, there is a kind of personal redemption in which you leave your inner imprisonment, and then there is another kind of redemption – when you leave your “I”. This is when you leave your ego for the sake of integrating with the rest of the Jewish people.

Thus, the beginning of redemption is to redeem our feelings. We need to first leave the materialism – the “bricks and mortar” – and enter the world of spirituality. The second part of our redemption, which is the purpose, is to reach our masculine kind of daas – the revelation of unity on the world; in other words, to nullify our “I.”

Hashem should merit all of the Jewish people that we all integrate with each other and from there, to integrate in unison with the Creator, who is really only One who exists.