

Shabbat Shuva, Shlichut by Rav Soloveitchik zt"l

- Nisson Shulman.

A Shabbat Shuva Derasha, part of Rav Soloveitchik zt"l's 1964 Yahrtzeit Shiur for his father, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, zt"l. Subject, Shlichus.

SHABBAT SHUVA SHIUR: HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Shlichus

This shiur was delivered by the Rav as part of his 1964 Yahrtzeit Shiur for his father, Rav Moshe ZT"L. The following summary is based on a tape, available from M. Nordlicht, and supplemented with the Hebrew summary of the shiur printed in Ymay Zikaron.)

The concept of Kavod Habriyos, respect for a fellow human being, is a fundamental principle in Judaism upon which many Halachos are based. For example, the laws dealing with the entire burial process, Kavod Hames and Kvurah, laws of mourning, embarrassing someone publicly are based on Kavod Habriyos. Indeed one can go so far as to say that all commandments Bayn Adam Lchavayro, between man and his fellow man, are based on Kavod Habriyos. The Ramban goes even further and classifies the obligation of the 7 Noachide laws under the heading of an even more fundamental principle, Tzelem Elokim, the creation of man in the image of God. The Ramban notes that the verse in Psalms (8:6) of Kavod Vhadar Teatrayhu, you shall crown him with honor and splendor, expresses a similar concept of man created in Tzelem Elokim. The Kavod here refers to Kavod Elokim and as Chazal called it Kavod Habriyos.

One can ask the following fundamental question: does Judaism view this longing for Kavod Elokim as a positive or negative aspiration? Chazal stated often that man should distance himself from the pursuit of Kavod. Chazal warn us that jealousy, desire and (pursuit of) honor remove man from the world (Avos 4:21). Gedulah, grandeur, eludes those that seek it (Eruvin 13b). One may ask: if the Torah wanted man to distance himself from the pursuit of Kavod, why was he "adorned in Kavod" as noted in Psalms? Because Kavod is an attribute of Hashem, the Melech Hakavod. We are commanded to walk in the ways of Hashem, Vhalachta Bdrachav. If Hashem is Melech Hakavod we must strive to emulate Him and aspire to Kavod. Based on the obligation to emulate Hashem, we can begin to glimpse why the concept of Kavod plays such a central role in Judaic thought and why Judaism stressed the equation of Tzelem Elokim and Kavod Vhadar.

To understand Judaism's different, apparently contradictory approaches to Kavod we must analyze the following passage (Nidah 30b): "Upon the birth of the child the angel strikes the child on the mouth. and he does not leave from there prior to the administration of an oath, as it says Ki Lcha Tichra Kol Berech Tishava Kol Lashon (Isaiah 45:23). Kil Lcha Tichra Kol Berech connotes the day of death. Tishava Kol Lashon connotes the day of birth. What is this oath? That the child should be righteous and not wicked and no matter how much people may speak of you as a righteous person, always perceive yourself as wicked. And you should know, that Hashem is pure and his servants are pure and the soul that was implanted in you is pure. Your mission is to maintain its purity. Success is appreciated, Mutav. Failure to maintain the purity of your soul will result in Hashem removing it from you." Note that this oath does not interfere with the concept of free will. Man retains the ability to serve God if he so desires.

The above statements from the Gemara provide the framework for understanding the metaphysical/philosophical role of man in this world and how Chazal viewed the proper pursuit of Kavod. These principles were revealed to Moshe Rabbeinu in Egypt. Indeed it is impossible to fully appreciate the role played by Moshe in Jewish legacy from the infancy of our nation in Egypt to the present day without a full understanding of this passage.

Parshas Shemos introduces a brand new fundamental concept in Judaism that offers a completely new perspective on the role of man relative to creation. This concept was first revealed to Moshe in Egypt. The verse that introduces this concept is often overlooked, and quickly read without appreciating the significance of the idea that it conveys, in terms of its relevance to Moshe and the entire Jewish Nation. The words are "V'ata L'cha V'eshlachacha El Pharoh", and now go and I will send you to Pharo. This represents a brand new relationship between Hashem and man.

For the first time, Hashem, the Master of all, appoints a frail human being as His emissary, His Sholiach. How is this possible? We have a principle that Shelucho Shel Adam K'moso, the emissary represents the one who charged him with the task. How is it possible for a human being of flesh and blood, here today and gone tomorrow, to act as the representative of Hashem? There is no intellectually satisfactory answer to this question, yet the fact is that Moshe was sent as the emissary of Hashem. This notion of Moshe as emissary of Hashem is reinforced by the verse "And he sent an emissary (Malach) and took us out of Egypt" (Bamidbar 20:16). Rashi interprets Malach as referring to Moshe. Apparently, the fact that man was created in the image of God, B'tzelem Elokim, allows man to assume the role of emissary from God to the rest of creation. Instead of saying that the relationship between Hashem and man is one of Shelucho Shel Adam K'moso, we should view it Shelucho Shel Makon Nivra B'tzalmo, the emissary of Hashem was created in His image. If it was possible for Moshe to be the emissary of Hashem, it is possible for every person to do the same. If one were to ask: what is the purpose of man in this world? The answer would be that man was sent to be the emissary of Hashem. The obligation to function as His emissary is implicit in the birth of man. Man accepts this responsibility by "taking" an oath, a Shevua, as it says Ki L'cha Tichra Kol Berech Tishava Kol Lashon. The coupling of an oath with Shlichus is found in Tanach. Abraham made his servant, Eliezer, take an oath that he would fulfill his mission to find a wife for Isaac from his family in Charan. Also, Jacob had Joseph swear an oath that he would bury him in Mearas Hamachpelah. Usually, Shlichus does not require the reinforcement of an oath, however in situations where the Shlichus is a complicated one and difficult to fulfill, it is reinforced through an oath. Jacob knew that Joseph would have difficulty in fulfilling his promise, hence the need to reinforce it and prevent Joseph from retreating from his obligation.

When man sins, he transgresses in two respects. The first is the act of sin itself and its associated blemish. In addition, the act of sin desecrates the Shlichus that each of us has been charged with, Moel B'shlichus. The Midrash supports this concept beautifully: "And you should know that Hashem is holy and His emissaries are holy, and the soul that Hashem gave you is holy". You are up to the task of being the emissary of Hashem.

According to Judaic philosophy, man exists as long as Hashem has a mission for him to perform, and as long as man does not desecrate this Shlichus. If either of these is no longer valid, the

Mshaleach, Hashem, cancels the Shlichus at His discretion. This is the meaning of Ki L'cha Tichra Kol Berech, referring to the death of the individual. This concept is echoed in the verse (Job 15:5-6) that man's existence is likened to that of a hired worker. Once his task is completed, he is sent away.

Judaism goes further still with the concept of Shlichus. The fact that an individual lives in a specific time and place is no accident. It is all part of the will of Hashem to place man in a situation that will provide him the optimal opportunity to fulfill his Shlichus. Questions like why we were placed in this specific time period and not in a previous or future generation can only be answered through the framework of Shlichus. The Hashgacha knows what period is most appropriate for each person to fulfill his Shlichus. Each person is given the abilities required to fulfill the Shlichus, because a Shlichus that can't be performed, Shlichus Sheiy Efsar L'kaymo, is not considered a valid Shlichus, similar to a stipulation, a Ttnay that is impossible to meet is not a valid stipulation. That is why each person is created in his specific generation with his specific abilities.

The Rav extended an idea from Rav Kook ZT"L on the blessing of Elokay Ad Shelo Notzarti (that we recite at the conclusion of the Amidah on Yom Kippur and brought down in the Talmud in Berachos 17a) as follows. My God, in the countless generations that preceded me and that will succeed me You did not see fit to create me because You knew that I was not worthy, Keday, to be sent out as Your emissary in those generations. And even though You have sent me as emissary in this generation, I have accomplished so little of my mission, I have been so ineffective, as if I would have existed in a different, sub-optimal generation relative to my ability to fulfill my Shlichus.

The concept of Shlichus applies to man and angel alike. The difference between them is that man has free will and can choose whether or not to fulfill his mission, while the angel does not have free will and has no choice but to comply with the will of Hashem. When the angels visited Abraham after his circumcision, the Torah refers to them as Anashim, People. When the same angels visited Lot in Sodom, they were called Malachim, angels. The Midrash, quoted by Rashi, says that the angels were called people, because next to Abraham who was regularly visited by angels, they appeared as ordinary people. Next to Lot who was not used to seeing angels, they appeared truly as angels, and are referred to as such. The Rav added that Abraham, who was exemplary in his kindness and was unflagging in his drive to make known the name of Hashem to all, was the most exemplary Malach possible, a human being who does the will of Hashem. All he needed to do to see an angel was to look in the mirror. An angel in the house of Abraham did not add anything since Abraham was always ready to act in the role of emissary of Hashem. Relative to Abraham, an angel was as unremarkable as the addition of straw to Ophrayim, or magic to Egypt (Menachos 85a).

However, in Sodom, where the entire concept of Shlichus Hashem was forgotten, the arrival of these angels created a major sensation. Everyone asked: "have you heard that 2 strangers have arrived who do not live as we do, but rather they are following the orders of Hashem?" The people of Sodom refused to acknowledge their Creator and anyone who would follow Him.

Lot, the rejecter of the values of Abraham, was not worthy to see angels while he traveled with

his uncle. When he finally did see the angels that were sent to him, they appeared to him as real angels, and impressed him as such. On the other hand, Abraham had only to look in the mirror to behold the most beautiful angel, himself. In comparison to Abraham, the angels were no better than Anashim, people, which is the greatest title one can earn. Abraham attained that title.

There are 4 areas in which the Shelichus of God to man differs from Shelichus between man and man.

The first relates to the scope of the Shelichus. Shelichus as defined by the Choshen Mishpat is limited to a specific task through the process of appointment, Minuy. For example a Sholiach is appointed Lholacha, to carry the Get (divorce document) from the man to the woman, or vice versa a Sholiach L'kabbala sent to accept the Get on behalf of the woman. The Shelichus must be definable and exact. One cannot appoint someone as his Sholiach for everything, and not specify the tasks. Just as someone may not obligate himself to pay an unspecified amount one may not accept an unlimited Shlichus.

However, the Shlichus from God to man is exactly the opposite: it is open ended and unspecified to the emissary. From time to time man is assigned new tasks and missions. It is a life long responsibility that starts with birth and ends with the death of the individual. Man may be given different tasks to perform, but he does not have the right to accept some and reject others. Man can never know the true purpose for his creation, what mission was his to fulfill.

The Yerushalmi (Peah 3b) bears out this principle. The Gemara relates the story of the mother of Rabbi Tarfon who took a stroll in the courtyard. She broke her shoelace and was unable to walk any further. Rabbi Tarfon placed his hands under her feet to allow her to walk on his hands until she reached her bed. Once, Rabbi Tarfon became seriously ill and the Rabbis came to visit him. When they arrived, his mother begged them to pray for her son, Rabbi Tarfon, who has the merit of honoring his mother, Kibbud Aym, fulfilling this Mitzva above and beyond what is required of him. She related the story to them of how he allowed her to walk on his hands till she reached her bed. After hearing the story, the Rabbis declared, that even if he had done so 1 million times, he still would not have achieved half the respect the Torah demands from a child to a parent.

Why did the Rabbis belittle and condemn Rabbi Tarfon's performance of the Mitzvah of Kibbud Aym? After all, where was their compassion for an old woman who begs them to pray for her son, a son that was the great Rabbi Tarfon? Kibbud Aym is one of the Mitzvos that extend the life of the one who performs it, so what was wrong with the way he performed the Mitzvah or with his mother mentioning it as a merit and Zchus?

The answer is that the Rabbis were thinking about Rabbi Tarfon's true mission in life. Logically, one would assume that his mission was to be one of the elders of Yavneh, to be the Talmudic partner of Rabbi Akiva, to teach Torah and be a critical link in the Massorah, tradition, to the succeeding generations. Apparently Chazal were not so certain of this. Maybe his true mission in life was not to be a great scholar, but rather he was sent to perform the Mitzvah of Kibbud Aym for an elderly mother. Perhaps for the task of perpetuating the Massorah alone, Hashem might have sent someone else, and there would have been no need for Rabbi Tarfon to become the great scholar he was. So apparently he had another mission as well, but perhaps that mission was

secondary to the one of Kibbud Aym. When the Rabbis heard from his mother that he had fulfilled the obligation of Kibbud Aym completely, they realized that once his mission is complete, the messenger is no longer needed. They said that Rabbi Tarfon had not even begun to approach the fulfillment of Kibbud Aym, which perhaps might have been his life mission. Therefore he needed to regain his health in order to continue his pursuit of this mission. Heaven forbid that he should be considered to have completed his mission!

Chazal said (Taanis 9b) that sometimes Hashem makes it rain over an entire continent in order that one blade of grass may grow. Similarly, a great person, as great as Rabbi Tarfon, can be sent down to this world to fulfill a seemingly insignificant mission, to serve an elderly mother, or to help a fellow Jew. This is a tremendous lesson that we all should learn, never to say that such a task is beneath me, or others can do it better than me. This would be in opposition to Judaic thought. That is why Chazal emphasized that man should be as careful in the performance of a Mitzvah Kallah, an ostensibly simple Mitzvah to fulfill, as he would be in the performance of a Mitzvah Chamurah, a complicated and difficult Mitzvah. For just like no one knows the true reward for a Mitzvah, one does not know for what purpose he was created and sent out as a Shlich Hashem.

The second difference between the Shlichus of the Chosen Mishpat and that of Hashem, is in the former the Shlich is sent as representative of the Mshaleach, the principal, because the Mshaleach does not choose to perform the act on his own. If the Mshaleach was to accompany the Shlich, there would be no need to send a Shlich. For example, if a husband and wife are both in the same city, the Halacha says that one should not appoint a Shlich to carry away the Get.

In the Shlichus of Hashem, Hashem assigns a mission to man, yet He accompanies man in performance of the mission. For without the help of Hashem, man would not be able to accomplish anything. As it says (Psalms 127:1), If Hashem will not watch over the city, the efforts of the watchman are for naught, and if Hashem will not build the city, the artisans have worked in vain. If Hashem will not accompany them, they will be powerless to accomplish anything.

This aspect of Shlichus Hashem is paradoxical. In the case of 2 people who contribute to an act, and where the participation of one of them does not aid significantly in the completion of the task, the Halacha obligates the major contributor and exonerates the minor one. This is the principle of Mesaya'ah Ayn Bo Mamash, one who helps along has added nothing. In reality Hashem is the one who is performing the mission, all man has to do is go along and simply lend a hand. Jacob said that the stone that he has erected will be a foundation for the ultimate building of the Bais Hamikdash. Ultimately Hashem completed the building, yet Jacob was considered a partner because he set the first stone.

This paradox of Shlichus was revealed to Moshe by Hashem when He sent him to Pharaoh. Moshe questioned: who was he to approach Pharaoh and to free the people from Egypt? Aaron is better suited to this task. Hashem explained to Moshe that he was making a fundamental mistake. Moshe thought that he would be responsible for freeing the people and Hashem will remain hidden in His heavenly abode and be a non-participant in the exodus process. Hashem said that

He will accompany Moshe every step of the way, for without the help of Hashem, no one, not even Aaron, could accomplish a thing. Not only will Hashem accompany Moshe, but He will accompany Aaron as well and guide his tongue to say what Hashem wants him to say. Moshe, you will realize the full magnitude of this in a short time, when you will worship Hashem and receive the Torah on this mountain after the exodus. And you will wonder how is it possible for a group of slaves to turn themselves around so quickly to become the chosen nation of Hashem and to proclaim Naaseh V'nishma, we will do and will listen, at Mount Sinai. The answer is that I will accompany you and make it possible. The lesson is that the Shlichus of Hashem can never be too difficult to perform, because the Mshaleach, Hashem, accompanies every person in the performance of his mission.

The third difference is in the ability to complete the Shlichus

In the Shlichus of man to man, the assumption is that the emissary who wants to fulfill his mission, will indeed complete it fully (Eruvin 31b). In the Shlichus from Hashem to man, the opposite is true. Man can never complete his assigned tasks. Man must always break off his pursuit of fulfilling his mission in the middle. Chazal expressed this concept in Pirkei Avos in the statement that the time is short, the required work is vast, the workers are lazy and the Master of the house is pushing them to perform their tasks. They may try to complete it, but they never can.

The fourth difference is not a Halachic distinction, but rather a practical one. No matter how great a person may be, he should never think that his mission is more important than the mission of another person. Each person has been charged with a mission by the Master of the universe, and been given the abilities to perform his mission. The perceived importance of the Shlichus, or the degree of completion of the mission, are not important. Rather, the sincerity and self-sacrifice endured in the completion of the mission is the most critical aspect of fulfilling it.

The following Gemara (Berachos 17a) underscores this point:

I am a creation of Hashem and so is my friend. My work is in the city and his is in the fields. Just as I do not aggrandize myself in his work (an alternate reading is "in my work") so to he does not aggrandize himself in my work (alternate reading "in his work"). And if you will say that I have accomplished more, we have a rule that the quantity is not important, but rather what is important is that one act for the sake of heaven.

Rashi explains this statement as follows: I and my friend, a simple worker in the Galilee, are both creations of Hashem. My job is to study Torah in the Beis Midrash while his calling is an agricultural one. You might ask how can we possibly compare the peasant farmer to the great Rosh Yeshiva? We know what the Rabbis of Yavne accomplished. It was through their efforts that Torah and Judaism survived through the ages, through all the horrible tragedies that befell our people. It is their names, Rabbi Akiva, Rabban Gamliel, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai, that shine through whenever we discuss a Talmudic or Midrashic text. What did the Galilean farmer contribute to Jewish History? How did he sacrifice to perpetuate it? Does anyone recall his name, his residence, his contribution? The Rabbis of Yavne affirmed constantly a most important lesson: ne may not exult in the Shlichus that they have been given relative to the Shlichus of

another person. The legacy of remembrance is not important. What is important is the devotion with which one carries out their appointed task, their Shlichus. The level of sanctity is not measured by the attribution achieved, but through the Misiras Nefesh a person exhibits in carrying out his task. Judaic thought stresses that no man should place himself above his neighbor and think that through his merit and his accomplishments others exist. Shlichus is measured through the commitment and self sacrifice, hence no one can claim superiority over their fellow man.

The Torah tells us that Joseph related his dreams to his father and his brothers. According to some opinions, Joseph related both dreams to Jacob, while others are of the opinion that Jacob was only told about the second dream. If we accept the opinion that Jacob knew about both dreams, why did Jacob wait to scold Joseph until after hearing about the second dream? We also know that Jacob believed that the dream(s) would come true, as it says Vaviv Shamar Es Hadavar. If so, why did he scold him at all? Rashi explains that Jacob sought to diffuse the brothers' hatred towards Joseph by displaying anger on his part as well.

The Rav suggested the following explanation of Jacobs's actions. Even though Jacob believed in the ultimate fulfillment of the dreams, he felt that Joseph saw the dreams through a one-sided view, that the brothers would be subservient to Joseph. Jacob felt that the dreams portended a dual outcome. As mentioned above, Jacob did not react to the first dream. One might have expected that Jacob would have taken greater exception to Joseph's first dream, which implied economic and political domination over his brothers. The second dream revolved around spiritual matters, that Joseph believed that he was greater than the other brothers. On the surface it does not seem so terrible that Joseph believed that he would be the spiritual leader of Bnay Yisrael. Economic and political domination seemed more ominous. Yet Jacob saw a fundamental difference between the dreams. Jacob realized that both dreams would be fulfilled, but in a completely different manner than Joseph foresaw them. There would be a time in Jewish History in Egypt when Joseph would be the Viceroy of Egypt and the brothers, represented by the bundles of wheat, would have to bow to his economic and political will. This came true when the brothers descended to Egypt to purchase food during the famine. Political and economic might over others is a reality. Such is the way that Hashem created the world, that those granted the ability to help others should not squander their opportunity to accomplish great things and it is also normal for the poor to be jealous of the wealthy. Jacob realized that the second dream did not revolve around political strength, but rather around spiritual superiority, whose Shlichus was greater, Joseph's or his brothers? Who possessed the greater intrinsic level of Kdusha? Jacob obviously felt that the dreams would be fulfilled; otherwise he would not have anticipated their fulfillment (Shamar es Hadavar). Since one can never assume that their mission is greater than the next person, one must be prepared to see the fulfillment of a mission or a dream from both ends, from the dominator and subservient roles. Joseph's brothers would have to bow down to him at some point, that was his mission, his Shlichus. However Jacob did not want Joseph to belittle his brothers for they had a sacred mission as well, one which he would have to acknowledge and for which he would have to bow to them as well.

The first dream, which revolved around economic and political clout, did not cause the major rift that divided the brothers. As the Beis Halevi says, requesting charity does not in and of itself result in a denigration of the requestor. The fact that the brothers would depend on Joseph

economically would not diminish the roles of the brothers. Hence the Torah does not use the term Kinah regarding the first dream. However the brothers were jealous of the second dream. That dream revolved around Joseph's interpretation of whose Shlichus was more important and critical for the survival and continuity of the Jewish nation. In the end, both missions were important, hence Joseph and the brothers were forced to bow to each other and recognize the significance of each other's mission.

Where do we find that the dream came true according to both points of view, Joseph bowing to and acknowledging his brothers and the brothers doing the same for Joseph? Before Joseph died the Torah tells us that he asked his brothers and their families to promise to transport his remains together with theirs to Eretz Yisrael when they leave Egypt in the years to come. On further examination this was a most amazing request. Here was Joseph, the Viceroy of Egypt, who is capable of incarcerating and judging his brothers with a simple gesture, asking them to show him favor and transport his remains from Egypt! These are the same brothers who earlier were ready to accept the fate of being slaves to Joseph in retribution for how they treated him as a child, and Joseph must ask them for a favor? Why didn't Joseph ask his own children, Menashe and Efrayim, princes in Egypt, to carry out his wishes? Why didn't he ask that his own tribe take responsibility for his remains at the exodus? Because the mighty Joseph realized that he is incapable of accomplishing on his own a most important goal: he cannot ensure his place in Jewish History without the help of his brothers. They had been distant and divided for so long. As long as his brothers would not accept him he would not be included in the Shvity Kah. Hence his request of them to include his remains with theirs at the exodus. In order for his name to be inscribed on the breastplate worn by the Kohen Gadol, he had to accept the significance and role of the other brothers in the legacy of the Jewish nation. His greatness in Egypt would have been an insignificant footnote in history if he would not be included with his brothers among Shvity Kah. Only his brothers could guarantee that. Joseph administers an oath to his brothers that they will include him, that they will elevate (Vhaaliysem) his status to that of Shvity Kah by elevating his remains together with theirs from Egypt. To ensure this, Joseph bows and acknowledges his brothers.

When was the other perspective of the dream fulfilled? When did the brothers bow before Joseph and acknowledge his contribution to Jewish History and the Jewish Nation? It was fulfilled many years later, on the night of the Exodus. The Torah describes the scene in Egypt, how the rest of the Jewish nation was accumulating gold and silver and fine articles in compliance with the request of Hashem to fulfill the promise of the Bris Bayn Habesarim of "And afterwards they shall leave with great riches". Chazal tell us that Moshe was nowhere to be found. Where was he? Moshe was searching for the remains of Joseph. Moshe took it upon himself to fulfill the promise the brothers made to Joseph many years before. Now, who was Moshe? Moshe was the grandson of Levi, Levi the enemy of Joseph, the co-conspirator with Shimon to kill Joseph that fateful day many years before. Yet it was none other than his grandson, the great Moshe, leader of all the Jews, who personally searched for Joseph's remains and who delayed their departure from Egypt until they were accounted for. At this moment when Moshe and the people refused to leave until they had retrieved Joseph's remains they bowed to his legacy and affirmed his significance and the role he played in the preservation of the Jewish nation. Moshe would not leave without the remains of the great individual who was immersed in Egyptian culture the longest yet blazed a trail to teach all Jews throughout our history how to survive in a long, dark

and seemingly endless Diaspora, how to live as a Jew through wealth and poverty. Indeed Moshe honored Joseph by personally caring for the remains throughout the 40 years wandering in the desert. Through his grandson, Levi admitted his mistake and acknowledged Joseph's important role and mission. Could there possibly be a more fitting fulfillment of the dream of 11 stars and the sun and the moon bowing down to Joseph than Moshe and the entire Jewish People honoring Joseph on the night of the exodus? In the end, Joseph and the brothers honored each other, and recognized that each side had an equally important mission to fulfill.

If we view these 4 foundations of Shlichus we can answer the basic questions regarding the concept of Kavod, honor. Is Kavod a divine attribute that we should strive to emulate? We have seen statements from Chazal that affirm and refute this. Ultimately what is Kavod? It results when man understands his self-importance. When man realizes that he is the emissary of Hashem, he is treated with the honor and dignity accorded a royal ambassador. Man's Kavod is directly attributable to his fulfilling the Shlichus entrusted to him through his Tzelem Elokim, his creation in image of Hashem. One who desecrates his own honor cannot serve as a Shaliach. Hence the Rambam (Hilchos Eidus 11) notes that one who is scorned because of his own actions is unacceptable as a witness because one who will not elevate himself and recognize his Tzelem Elokim is lacking Ne'emanus (is not trustworthy). Recognition of one's Shlichus and Tzelem Elokim is the most divine affirmation of Kavod as a divine attribute. However when one believes that his mission is more important than that of his fellow man, when he belittles another human being, then Kavod becomes a disgusting attribute. Since no one can ultimately know what his main Shlichus is in this world, he may never claim superiority over another human being. Since the efficacy of the Shlichus is determined by the self-sacrifice brought to the task, a man may not demand Kavod in return for his actions.

Indeed, Kavod becomes a disgusting attribute when it is confused with the word Gedulah (greatness). What differentiates these words? When Achashveirosh seeks to honor Mordechai for saving the king's life, he asks: what greatness (Yekar U'Gedulah) was granted to Mordechai for saving the king from the palace plotters? Chazal say that anyone who runs after grandeur, Gedulah, the Gedulah runs away from him. Gedulah implies a notion of superiority over another human being. Haman extols his greatness, bestowed upon him by the king (Ays Asher Gidlo Hamelech Vasher Nis'o al Hasarim Vavday Hamelech). His sati