



Published on www.bilvavi.net

[Home](#) > Fixing Your Earth [Laziness] - 008 Doubts & The Solution

Fixing Your Earth [Laziness] - 008 Doubts & The Solution

דע את מידותיך הדרכה מעשית - עפר-עצלות מפורט 008 - אש דמים דעפר

Fire-of-Water-of-Earth: When Laziness Comes From Doubts

With *siyata d'shmaya* we continue here to learn about the element of earth and its resulting trait, laziness. Here we will learn about [the laziness that results from the nature of] **fire-of-water-of-earth**.

The element of earth is the root of laziness. The element of water is the root of the nature to become dragged\pulled after things. The element of fire is jumpy, and it is also opposing.

When one has a dominant element of earth in his nature, his heavy amount of earth makes him lazy, because earth brings on non-movement, or will at least slow down a person's movement. Although a person always has the power to move, this nature can become weighed down by a heavy amount of earth in his soul, so that he doesn't move that much. Even so, he will still move, whenever he is dragged\pulled after certain things. This idea was explained in the previous chapters.^[1] [1] What happens when a person doesn't want to move, and his only movements that he has are because he becomes dragged\pulled after certain things? He might seek a way to oppose whatever is pulling him into movement mode, so that he can remain in his lazy, unmoving state.

In this way, the person creates a war between his elements of water and fire. His water is dragging him, while his fire can oppose the pull. He does this so that he can return to his nature of earth, and become serene, unmoving, and lazy. This is all done on a subconscious level: he seeks to create a struggle between his water and fire, and this is the root of his laziness.

That is the nature of **fire-of-water-of-earth**. People with this nature will seek war and challenge. They thrive on the idea of opposition.

Some people look for challenges because they have a nature of fire, which is an aggressive element by its very nature. Due to their aggressive nature, they look for challenges and opposition, because they get pleasure and vitality from it. This kind of person will deliberately challenge others and seek some kind of opposition towards them, or, he might read books that describe the wars and battles of history. If he is a worked-upon person who is involved with *avodas Hashem*, he gets his main vitality from the *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) within him, and from his "war with the evil inclination" which he very much identifies with. In either of these cases, he is living in a constant state of war and he

derives vitality and enjoyment from it.

But here we are speaking of a different nature, **fire-of-water-of-earth**, which is a nature to seek out a war for the purpose of a serene state (earth) that comes after the opposition (fire). His purpose in creating a challenge is because he wants to get to the state of non-movement which will come after the challenge is over. So he is not in it for the sake of the challenge itself. Rather, he is using the challenge as a means to return to his unmoving, earthy nature.

We will explain this nature is manifest, but this is the general outline of the nature of **fire-of-water-of-earth**: The person's dominant nature of earth makes him lazy and therefore he doesn't like to move, so his water drags him towards different kinds of movement, and then his fire gets to work and opposes the dragging. His subconscious agenda is so that he can return to his nature of earth, so that he can be lazy again and not do anything.

Doubts - The Impaired Use of Dovor V'hipucho (Thinking Into The Opposite)

Deep in the soul, there is a power called **dovor v'hipucho**, to perceive "a matter and its opposite". We explained about this power in previous lessons. This ability is the secret of the inner unity in Creation. Although the Creation is full of opposing forces, Hashem combines together these opposite forces, through a common root of the opposite forces. The main rectification for the soul is to integrate opposite forces together.

However, when this deep power of the soul is misused by the lower, "animal" level of the soul, a person will use this power to uncover the opposite forces that can be found in everything, and from seeing so many different aspects that oppose each other, he becomes doubtful about everything, because he sees everything as deep and complex, and there is nothing concrete which he's sure of. In every situation, he will always go against the normal, accepted logic, by instead uncovering an opposing logic to it.

In some cases, a person goes against logic by simply acting silly and senseless. However, in other cases, a person discovers truth in an opposite kind of logic. What causes him to think of the opposite force in anything? It is a power ingrained in Creation. The ideal state of the soul, a perfected person, can see the opposite sides to each thing. But when this power is misused by the lower, unrefined parts of the soul, a person will deliberately create opposition by challenging his thinking. Then he becomes doubtful, because he sees different options, and he doesn't know which of them is the most logical.

When people are full of doubts, they may react to this by not doing anything at all about it, becoming passive and lazy. When people get used to always being doubtful about everything, they deliberately create issues for themselves, and even if it wasn't originally in their nature to be doubtful, it eventually becomes a second nature which they acquire onto their souls. The result is a laziness that comes from being in doubt.

This person appears to have a very doubtful nature, who has a problem of always opposing his logic and thereby creating issues for himself. But the truth is that his doubtful nature is merely a second nature that he has gotten used to, habitually, over time. The root of his problem is that he is really seeking to be lazy and not do anything. Subconsciously, his earthy nature, which seeks laziness, is causing him to doubt things, and in this way, he can 'justify' why he doesn't take action about anything. He doesn't begin to do anything, because he doubts it in the first place.

When a person lives with *yishuv hadaas* (a settled mind), he first thinks about what he will do and then he does it. The Kotzker said that in order for one to act enthusiastically, one must first think

about what he will do. But a person must also not think too much about what he is about to do. If he does, he is being lazy, and in the end, he won't do anything at all, after thinking so much about it. One should not either think too quickly before doing something. In any case, though, a person must first think before he acts.

However, there are people who begin to think about what they are about to do, and then they never get around to finish any action. Sometimes, this is because the person has a slow thinking process, and he can only think slowly before doing something. Sometimes it is because a person is not action-oriented, so he would rather think than get to work. And in other cases, it is because the person really doesn't want to do anything, because he has a last nature. He doesn't complete his thinking process about anything because deep down, he doesn't want to get it done.

That is the kind of laziness we are discussing here. This kind of person will conclude that he is not sure about what he needs to do, because he comes up with so many different possibilities of what he should do, and he can't decide between his options. So he decides to be passive about it and not do anything. His slow thinking becomes a way for him to justify his laziness.

The truth is that if one would see every possible option in front of him, he would never be able to completely decide. He would be overwhelmed by the many options. Part of deciding is to narrow down the possibilities. In order for a *halachah* to be decided upon, the possibilities must be narrowed down until the decision can be made. When **fire-of-water-of-earth** is a dominant nature in the soul, a person will look for contradictions and opposing options, and as a result he cannot take any practical action, because he is in doubt about what to do.

Excessive Fears and Doubts Are Rooted In Laziness

That is how this issue affects the mind. Now let's see how it affects a person practically.

Can a person predict all of the possible issues he will ever face in his life? Can a person know how many issues he will have in his marriage? When a person decides to get married, is he aware of all the details that are involved in marriage? If he would be aware, he would be overwhelmed and he wouldn't be able to make the commitment.

When a young couple wants to buy a house, do they realize all the issues involved with this, such as the environment, the neighbors, and how the children will fare there for the next 20 years? It is impossible to predict all these details, unless one has total *ruach hakodesh*.

What happens when a person doesn't want to do anything, because he thinks too much about the details involved and he can't make a decision? He might be disturbed by far-fetched issues which probably won't be relevant, but that's enough to overwhelm him and prevent him from making a decision. He has thought so much about it and uncovered so many doubts about it, that he cannot decide what to do. The more a person thinks, he sees more options. But in addition, he can't even act, as a result. He is in doubt, so he figures that his best course of action is not to do anything.

In everything he comes across, his reaction will either be full of doubts, or he is full of suspicions. He has all kinds of fears, of maybe this will happen, maybe that happen. Where does all this fear come from?

He is really afraid of taking action. When one repeats all these fears, as times goes on, he slowly acquires this habit as a second nature. He worries about every possibility that can theoretically happen. This is not genuine fear that comes upon the soul, it is just a second nature he has acquired. His problem is not fear. His real issue is that he doesn't want to do things. Since he doesn't want to do things, his subconscious pushes him to be afraid, so that he won't have to do those things. He is using

the fears as a tool to get to his goal – not doing what he wants to do.

A person with a nature of **fire-of-water-of-earth** deliberately brings himself into situations where he can oppose what has to be done. Even if he goes to a wise person for advice, his fears may seem genuine, because he is an expert at explaining why his fears and worries are substantial, and the wise person may conclude that indeed, this person's fears are correct. Deep down, in his subconscious, he has all these fears because he would prefer not to take action, so that he can get back to his nature of earth, which is to seek serenity. Therefore, he is really being lazy.

Creation Is Complex, So We Cannot Decide Completely On Anything

This issue is really a product of a deeper issue. When a person is full of doubts and fears, it is a result from something else. The root of the issue is not the doubts or the fears. One must certainly deal with the doubts and fears as well, but he mainly needs to get to the root of this issue. The fundamental way to understand it, and to repair this nature, is as follows.

Since everything in Creation is *dovor v'hipucho*, one must know that he will never be able to come to a complete decision about anything. There are endless contradictions within Creation. At a certain point, a person can realize that he cannot decide on anything, even on the slightest doubt he has. Although this seems to exasperate the issue of doubts even further – by confirming that indeed, we truly cannot decide whenever we are faced with doubts – this is the first step a person must traverse: acquiring this perspective that we do not have the power to decide on our own.

When people do feel that they can decide, it stems either from *gaavah* (conceit), or, it stems from being superficial, or, if a person is on a very high level, because he has complete *emunah*. A *baal gaavah* thinks his opinions are important, and a superficial person only sees one side of a matter, as if he is being faced with a choice of taking a thousand dollars versus taking one dollar, where the choice seems obvious to him. A person should instead think that the Creation is so vast and deep, as it is written, “*Very deep are Your thoughts*”, and therefore, we cannot completely decide on anything, because we cannot fully know anything.

How can a person have the power to decide? From our human power alone, we cannot decide. Decisions come from the power of *daas*, which is an extension from higher *emunah* that transcends our limited reality. In the higher dimension, *emunah*, it is only Hashem Who decides. This higher point, *emunah*, extends all the way into the lowest levels of reality, and into our own *daas*, and that is how we are enabled to decide.

Thus, the ability to make any decision does not come from our human ability. It comes totally from Hashem. We are only given of *bechirah*, to choose, to do the will of Hashem, or the opposite of His will [*chas v'shalom*]. That is all that we can do using our own power. Besides for our power of free will, we cannot decide on anything. Only from the *emunah* that it is Hashem Who decides everything, are we enabled to truly decide.

Only Hashem Acts and Decides

When one reaches this deep understanding, he weakens his doubts. As a result, when one is faced with contradicting options – and certainly if he has a dominant nature of **fire-of-water-of-earth**, he has much more doubts - instead of not doing anything about it, he can uncover the root of his doubts, using the doubts as a way to reveal that he cannot be sure of anything, for only Hashem has the answers.

If a person lives superficially, he has fewer doubts, because he doesn't think that much and therefore he doesn't uncover that many possible options in front of him. If he lives more inwardly, he will doubt

everything he comes across, because when he sees the depth and complexities of each thing in Creation, by seeing how each thing in Creation has an opposite to it, he uncovers more doubts. But if he goes deeper than this level, he will see that he cannot decide between all of the doubts he has, and he comes to realize that only Hashem can decide.

For example, a person has two options of who to marry, and he marries one of them, and sometime after the wedding, he regrets his decision. He is disappointed with his spouse and realizes that she isn't what he thought she was. He realizes he made a mistake and he thinks that he has made the worst decision in his life, and that he should have chosen the other girl he was offered. He has seen two options in front of him, and he is in doubt about his decision. But if he has *emunah*, he realizes that there is no doubt, because all decisions come from Hashem. He wasn't able to decide on his own in the first place, and therefore, there is no room for him to have any doubts.

With this approach, doubts do not cause me to be lazy and refrain from doing anything. Instead, doubts bring me to a sense of *bittul*, self-nullification, when I realize that only Hashem can decide. Doubts do not have to cause me to refrain from action - instead, doubts can cause me to return to the root of *emunah*, to act according to the decision of Hashem.

Rectifying Laziness - Through Attributing All Power To Hashem

The trait of laziness is evil and impaired when a person doesn't act. In contrast, the rectified, holy form of laziness is when a person doesn't take action because he realizes that only Hashem can act. Holy laziness is the realization that it is not I who does things, it is Hashem.

This is not just practical advice in how to deal with doubt. Rather, it is a deep rectification for the soul's trait of laziness. Instead of not acting because you are in doubt, do not see it as a personal contradiction you are grappling with. Rather, you should realize that the entire Creation contains contradictions and therefore, we are not able to do decide on our own. Any contradiction you face is a spark of the many contradictions in Creation. We cannot do anything on our own, only if Hashem allows it.

When we get used to working with this higher perspective and it eventually extends into our lower levels of the soul, this brings our soul to a sense of *bittul* (self-nullification), when we react to our doubts by reminding ourselves that only Hashem can decide things.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner says that when Chazal taught that there will come a time when there will be so many troubles that "We have no one to rely on, except our Father in Heaven", which is referring to the period *ikvesa d'meshicha* (the footsteps of *Mashiach*), part of the issues of this period is that people will rely so much on Hashem that they won't do anything at all, and then they blame Hashem for everything, because they misuse the concept of depending on Him for help. Sometimes a person must indeed rely on Hashem and not do anything at all, but sometimes, a person has the *avodah* to take action and realize Who enables him to act.

With a nature of **fire-of-water-of-earth**, a person doesn't act because he has doubts. One can return this power to its root by approaching his doubts with a new perspective. In this way, oppositions and doubts are seen not as something that opposes me, but a tool to receive Heavenly sustenance from Hashem [for when one uses his doubts as a vehicle to realize Who is the only One who can decide, only then is he enabled to truly decide, because he is tapping into the source.]

Doubts purify the soul when a person realizes that he cannot act from his own power. Doubts are crushing to the soul, and they make a person feel powerless. In that way, doubts are a great tool of self-purification - if a person uses the doubts as an opportunity for this. Doubts bring a person to the

sense of *bittul*, self-nullification, of realizing that one's power to act is not his own, but Hashem's.

On a deep level, by realizing that it is Hashem's power within our acts, our acts become true acts, and this is the ultimate rectification for laziness. All of our acts are somewhat lazy, for all our actions are somewhat incomplete, when compared to Hashem's acts, which are always perfect and complete. Therefore, when we realize that Hashem's power is in our own acts, and it is not our own power, this is the ultimate rectification for laziness.

What causes a person to think he is acting, and not Hashem? Simply, it is due to conceit, but the deeper reason is due to laziness. This is because when one is not aware that only Hashem can act, his actions are lazy, for he is missing the perspective that only Hashem enables a person to act.

In Conclusion

In summary, when a person has a nature to refrain from doing anything when he is full of doubts and worries about something, instead of reacting that way, one can use the doubts as a tool to realize that it is only Hashem Who can decide what to do, and only Hashem has the power to act. A human being does not have power of his own, and therefore he cannot decide on his own. In this way he reveals how it is Hashem Who is acting even within our own human actions. [This rectifies laziness, and in particular, the laziness that stems from **fire-of-water-of-earth**, which is a laziness that stems from doubt].

[1] [2] Editor's Note: Refer to Chapters 03 and 07 of this series.

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/fixing-your-earth-laziness-008-doubts-solution>

Links

[1] file:///D:/DATA-

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/need%20to%20place%20on%20site/TO%20UPLOAD/Fixing%20Your%20Earth%202.0%20-%20Laziness%20008.%20Doubts%20&%20The%20Solution.docx#_ftn1

[2] file:///D:/DATA-

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/need%20to%20place%20on%20site/TO%20UPLOAD/Fixing%20Your%20Earth%202.0%20-%20Laziness%20008.%20Doubts%20&%20The%20Solution.docx#_ftnref1