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## Fixing Your Earth [Sadness] - 006 Overdoing It

### *Water-of-Water-of-Earth: When There Is Too Much Expansion*

With *siyata d'shmaya* we are continuing to learn about the element of earth and its resulting trait, sadness. Now we will learn about sadness that comes from **water-of-water-of-earth**.

Unlike earth, which is dry, the water is a moist element. The opposite of sadness, *atzvus*, is *itzuv*, formation. We see that when something is formed correctly, it brings joy to us, and when something does not attain a proper form, it is saddening.

When we form something, we place water on earth, which moistens the earth and we can then fashion things from it. This is the constructive use of water combined with earth. But if too much water is applied, the earth becomes mushy, and we cannot form things with the moist clod of earth. Too much "water" doesn't allow for a formation. [In this lesson, we will refer to water as "*chiyus*", life-giving energy or vitality. Therefore, the idea is that applying too much energy into something is detrimental, and instead of causing joy, it brings sadness]. That is the outline of the idea we will explain about in this lesson.

### *Water-of-Earth: The Vitality In Completed Formations*

If we are combining physical earth and water together to make something, and the earth dominates the water, there can be a proper formation. If one is actualizing his potential, this is a constructive use of the element of earth, for the earth nurtures the potential of something. This is the opposite of the dryness of earth, which 'dries out' a person and prevents him from actualizing something. Through the actualizing of potential, one gives formation to his actions.

For example, when an expert craftsman takes raw material and builds something from it, and it is made by an expert, even seeing the object fills a person with life-giving vitality and joy. Usually something that looks beautiful brings joy to a person. But even if something isn't particularly beautiful, as long as it is completed and it refreshing to look at, it gives *chiyus*, a life-giving feeling of vitality, and it brings joy to a person when he sees it.

Similarly, a person can receive *chiyus* when he sees a person who appears to be full of life, and in contrast to this, he feels sad when he views a dead person. (But if he goes to a house of mourning, he can receive vitality from there, even when he thinks about death, as it is written, "*It is good to go to a house of mourning, and the living will take to heart.*")

When one views anything that gives him a refreshing feeling of life-giving energy or vitality, it brings

joy. Many people receive vitality from viewing various sculptures, pieces of art, architecture, or a scenic view. They feel more energized when they view these things. The work of the artist or sculptor actually contains the vitality of the one who fashioned it. The artist or sculptor has placed his own life into his work, and when people receive vitality from looking at the art or finished pieces, they are actually receiving the artist's vitality which has been placed into the art.

(For this reason, there is actually a certain gain to the various products which are manufactured today by computers, because the products do not contain any thoughts, since they are not made with the thoughts of a person, and therefore one is not gaining any impure thoughts of the maker, by using these items).

Applying this on a deeper level, a person can look at the Creation and receive vitality from viewing the Creation, the vitality of the Creator so to speak, by viewing His Creation, which is His handiwork.

All of the above is the repaired use of water-of-earth, where an increase of living-giving energy (the element of water) is cause for joy.

*Water-of-Water-of-Earth: 'Overdoing' It*

**Water-of-water-of-earth** [when it is impaired], though, is when there is a lot of water\vitality, to the point that it is detrimental.

For example, if a nice-looking picture is placed on the wall, it is pleasant to look at, but if we place too many pictures on the wall, it is no longer enjoyable to look at, because there is too much to focus on now. It makes the wall become too crowded, it is confusing to the eyes, and it is too much. Instead of a nice look, it becomes an eyesore.

When there is too much of something, even if it is beautiful and pleasant, the overabundance of it takes away its beauty. So when there is too much life-giving vitality that is placed into something, the overabundance of vitality actually becomes a root for sadness. Normally, life-giving vitality is a cause for joy, but too much vitality is a cause for sadness.

Here is a more tangible example. If a person is overly meticulous when he is working hard at something, making sure that it should be a perfect job, he will apply too much energy into what he's doing, much more than is necessary. He will keep adding on more and more to it, and eventually, it will look ugly. If he puts in a normal amount of effort into it, it looks nice. But if he can't finish what he's doing and he keeps adding to it, it looks ugly. Since he is expending too much energy on it, beyond his actual capacities, and this causes him to be sad about it.

This is impaired **water-of-water-of-earth**. It is a sadness that comes from applying too much energy into something. It is an overabundance of energy, which is not life-giving, but deathlike.

*'Dragged'*

When one puts in too much effort, much more than is necessary, he is just being 'dragged' (a negative use of the element of water). The problem here is that he isn't setting proper boundaries.

Impaired **water-of-water-of-earth** causes a person to be continuously dragged. For example, a person may wash fruit in the sink for 5 or 20 minutes, but if he places the fruits under the water for too long, the fruits become shriveled and ruined. Too much water has been applied. It causes the fruit to lose its form, its *itzuv*. When one places too much life-giving energy into something, this is too much 'water', and an overabundance of water ruins the formation of the earth. Thus, 'overdoing it' with too much vitality causes sadness.

## *The Two Roots of Sadness – Earth\Contraction, and Water\Expansion*

Through death, the physical body decomposes, because after death, a person loses the light of his *tzelem elokim* (his likeness to G-d), for his soul has left him. Although the body itself still retains some of the light of the *tzelem elokim*, it is only a tiny imprint, and not enough to prevent the body from decomposing. An exception to this is if the person was a great *tzaddik*, who still maintains his *tzelem elokim* on his body even after death, to the point that his body stays fully intact. But if one does not merit this level, his body decomposes. Why does the body decompose in the earth after death?

It is because the sin of Adam brought “separation” to the world. Adam and Chavah desired to eat from forbidden *Eitz HaDaas*, as the Torah says, “*And the tree was desirable...and she took of its fruit and ate.*”<sup>[1]</sup> <sup>[1]</sup> The verse in *Mishlei* teaches that a Torah scholar who seeks forbidden desires becomes shunned and “separated” from his friends.<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> Thus, the desire to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas* brought death, and hence all sadness, to the world. The trait of forbidden desire is rooted in the element of water. Therefore, water\desire is the root that caused all sadness to come to the world. From this we see that sadness comes from the impaired use of water. All death, and all sadness, came about from the desire to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas*, a forbidden desire which stems from the impaired element of water.

There is a *Midrash* that after Adam ate from the tree, he said, “*I ate, and I will continue to eat.*”<sup>[3]</sup> <sup>[3]</sup> The original act of eating stemmed from desire\water, and his desire to eat more from the tree stemmed from **“water”-of-water**.

At the beginning of Creation, the Torah says that there was “*tohu u'vohu*”, a vast depth of nothingness, which covered the earth, and darkness which covered the water. The *Midrash* states that this “*tohu*” which originally filled the world is the *tehom*, the deep waters of the world, which has the same letters as the word *hamaves*, death. Thus, the *tohu*, which was water, was the root of death. When Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, he was cursed with death, to return to the earth. The soul must return to G-d, and the body must return to earth, as a result of sin. The curse of death came about through *tohu*, the *tehom*, which is the deep “waters” of the world – a hint to the impaired kind of water.

The Gemara says that when Dovid HaMelech was digging into the ground to lay the foundation for the *Beis HaMikdash*, the waters of the *tehom* threatened to rise up and flood the world.<sup>[4]</sup> <sup>[4]</sup> On a deeper level, this can be understood that the many desires that are present in all the souls of people, are so vast that they can flood the world and bring death and destruction.

Therefore, Adam’s sin was that he used the evil kind of “water” in the soul, which is able to ‘flood’ the world. Thus, the sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas* did not merely stem from the element of earth (which is the simple understanding, for sin is associated with earth), but from the element of water, forbidden desire, which destroys the world: the waters of the *tehom*. This is how water\desire causes death and sadness: when there is too much water\desire. The Flood also came about through the sin of forbidden desires, and the Flood indeed brought death to the world.

Just as death\sadness can come through too much contraction, so can it come through too much expansion. These two root forces in Creation, contraction and expansion, are also known as *kamatz* (contraction) and *patach* (expansion).<sup>[5]</sup> <sup>[5]</sup> Sadness doesn’t only come from being in a state of contraction - it also comes from desire, from improper expansion, as we see from the desire to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas*, a desire which stemmed from water\expansion. It was this desire that caused death, sadness and separation (and decomposition of the physical body after death) to come to the world.

This is also described in different terms: The *tohu*, which refers to the *tehom*, is the root of evil that comes from water, while the *Eitz HaDaas* is the root of evil that came through the element of earth. That is why sadness can either come from contraction\earth, which is rooted in the *Eitz HaDaas*, or it may come from too much expansion\water, which is rooted in *tohu\tehom*.

To illustrate the idea, we can see that the waters of the world are not a place for residence. A person cannot live in the water. People swim in the water and they can spend some time in it, but not for that long. The waters of the world serve as a passageway to get from one place to another. But the water itself a place for death; it cannot be a place to live in.

So there are two roots for death: When there is contraction (earth\*Eitz HaDaas*), or when there is too much expansion (water\*tehom*). That is why there are two roots to sadness: either when there is contraction, or when there is too much expansion. The Gemara says, "Whoever adds, subtracts."<sup>[6]</sup> <sup>[6]</sup> When one "adds" more than necessary, there is too much expansion, and this is detrimental. Hence, expansion can be a cause for sadness.

Therefore, we gain the following insight about sadness. Whenever one is sad, simply we can say that this is because he feels that he is lacking something, he is missing something, and he wonders what is missing from life. But the deeper reason for his sadness is not because he is missing something, but simply because he has overdone himself! He has "expanded" too much.

As an example, both Kayin and Hevel wanted to expand past their boundaries. Kayin could not have killed Hevel, if Hevel would have stayed within his boundaries. The Torah says that Hevel "also" brought an offering, after Kayin did<sup>[7]</sup> <sup>[7]</sup>, and the depth of this is that Hevel wanted to expand past his boundaries, and therefore Kayin saw Hevel as a threat, because he feared that Hevel would interfere with his space. Hevel expanded too much, and this brought about his death.

In summary, sadness can either come from missing something, from contraction (earth), or it can come from "overdoing" it, which is expansion (water).

#### *The Solution: Limitations*

Therefore, the way to rectify sadness which comes from **water-of-earth-of-water**, which is the sadness that comes from too much expansion, is by realizing one's limitations. In order to work on this idea, one should refer to other lessons where we have explained about this concept.<sup>[8]</sup> <sup>[8]</sup>

We have explained here the two roots of sadness, contraction and too much expansion, and how to repair the sadness that comes from too much expansion (earth-of-water-of-earth).

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<sup>[1]</sup> <sup>[9]</sup> *Beraishis* 2:9

<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[10]</sup> *Mishlei* 18:1

<sup>[3]</sup> <sup>[11]</sup> *Beraishis Rabbah* 19:12

<sup>[4]</sup> <sup>[12]</sup> *Succah* 53b

**[5]** <sup>[13]</sup> (*Kamatz and patach are different sounds of pronunciation for Hebrew letters (Lashon HaKodesh). The “kamatz” is pronounced as an “uh” sound, and the “patach” is pronounced as an “ah” sound).*)

**[6]** <sup>[14]</sup> Sanhedrin 29a

**[7]** <sup>[15]</sup> Beraishis 4:4 (Editor’s Note: There are many other reasons as well as to why Hevel was punished with death at the hands of Kayin)

**[8]** <sup>[16]</sup> *Editor’s Note: Refer to **Fixing Your Focus 005 - Addicted To Same Behaviors and Thoughts***

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