



Published on www.bilvavi.net

[Home](#) > Joy from the Four Elements - 006 Joy From Continuous Actualization

Joy from the Four Elements - 006 Joy From Continuous Actualization

The "Water" Within the Element of Earth

We have so far discussed the joy that can be drawn from the four elements within the element of earth [which branches out from the element of earth, hence the previous four chapters discussed the branches of "earth"-of-earth]. Now we shall discuss the joy we can draw forth from the element of water [which branches out from the element of earth, hence we are discussing "water"-of-earth].

Deriving Joy From Water/Vitality

Generally speaking, there are several properties in the element of water. One of the aspects of water is that it revitalizes. It gives *chiyus* (nourishment). Just as water nourishes the earth in the physical life and keeps things alive, so does water in the soul nourish the soul.

The better quality a person's *chiyus* is, the better quality joy he will have. If *chas v'shalom* a person is gaining his main *chiyus* from negative sources, the more he will be led to sadness.

As a fundamental example, the difference between death and life. Death is associated with sadness, with earth and life is linked with vitality, with water. The birth of a child brings untold joy to the parents. An addition of life, a new life, brings vitality and joy. The more vitality and life a person gains, the more joy he will gain.

Joy Comes From Vitality, Sadness Comes From Being Forced

True life comes from deriving vitality from what we do, speak, feel, think and want. But when we do things because we have to, when we think because we have no choice, when we speak because we have to, we are distanced from true joy.

We don't mean that a person shouldn't do things if he doesn't get vitality from them. If a person is obligated to do something, he must do it whether he feels like doing it or not. Certainly we must keep the *mitzvos* whether we feel like we are getting vitality from it or not. Rather, what we are speaking about here is how to live a life of happiness, and how to derive vitality from what we do. If a person does only what he enjoys, he lives a hedonistic life, with no acceptance of the yoke of Hashem's *mitzvos*. We must emphasize this point, before continuing. Together with doing all that we must do, we must also find life and joy in what we do.

How do people get joy and vitality? When people do things they enjoy, such as eating what they like to eat, they feel vitality and joy from it. This is superficial joy. It is not true joy. True joy and vitality is gained by doing what you personally need to do. This is what utilizes your true personal soul potential. That is where you will find your true vitality and joy.

Water (Vitality) Needs Earth (Stability)

Here are some examples of the idea.

Where do the fruits and vegetables get their vitality from? From water. But what about fruits that are disconnected from the ground? All the water in the world cannot grow them. They need to be in the ground, and only then can the water nourish them further. So, it is not enough to get watered. They also need to be connected to the earth.

Another example: a fetus in its mother. A fetus is kept alive from its mother. It is being nourished by its mother, but it cannot survive unless it stays inside the mother, connected to its source of life. When a baby is born, he needs to be connected to his mother, in addition to getting fed. He needs his mother. He may be able to nurse from another mother, but he needs to be around his mother, in order to truly become nourished. He needs his source.

It is written, *“For with You is the source of life.”*^[1] [1] True *chiyus* (vitality) in life comes from being attached with the Source of our life, Hashem. Therefore, whenever we receive vitality that isn't from our true source, we must realize that it is only a 'partial' vitality. It is not the true vitality we need. Only when we connect to our inner source, within, will we find true vitality. Therefore, the better a person recognizes himself and he is actualizing his potential, the more he derives vitality from himself, from his soul. He gains true vitality and true joy.

Why is there very little joy in the world? It is because most people are deriving only superficial joy, not a joy that comes from their inner self. The more people would actualize their true potential, the more they would reach true joy.

Deriving Joy From “Earth”-of-Water-of-Earth

Now that we have explained in general how joy is drawn from the element of water, our main source of vitality, let's now explain how we draw forth joy from **“earth”-of-water** [of earth].

One of the main aspects of earth is its permanence, its consistency, its precision. The more a person uses his element of water without earth, he becomes spread out, like the water which doesn't settle in any one place but which flows all over the place. By revealing earth, one directs his water with precision and stabilizes the water.

Contemplating The Beginning, Middle, and End Points of Our Strongest Area

Here is an example of how we can use earth-of-water [of earth] in the soul to access joy.

We have explained in previous lessons that one first needs to become clear about what his strongest area is, and then one should become clear about what to do with it and how to direct it properly. Finally, a person needs to become clear about how he should go about actualizing it.

In this way, one contemplates the beginning point, end point, and middle point. The beginning point is to become clear about what your strongest area is. The end point is to actualize it. The middle point is to figure out what to do with your strongest area and how to direct it.

This kind of contemplation brings a person a source of joy.

Joy Comes From The Process of Trying To Reach Joy

Another example of the idea is the three festivals, Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot. The climax of the festivals is Succot, which is called *zman simchaseinu*, the time of our joy. However, joy is not limited to the festival of Succot. The Torah commands us to celebrate with joy on the first festival, Pesach, and also on the festival between Pesach and Succot, which is Shavuot. There is joy on Succot because it is the climax of the festivals, the end point, and there is joy upon completion. But there is also joy throughout the festivals, which begins with Pesach and continues to Succot. There is joy in the beginning, Pesach, and joy in the middle, Shavuot, and joy at the end, Succot. Thus, the festivals are essentially a continuous process of joy.

While the goal and climax of the festival is Succot, it begins with Pesach. There can be joy throughout all of the festivals, because there is a joy that comes at the end, and therefore there can be joy already from the beginning and throughout the entire time we are heading towards the goal.

Thus, joy is not only for the end. Joy can be experienced throughout the entire process of trying to get the endpoint, to the climax of the joy.

Deriving Joy From Trying To Actualize Our Strongest Quality

Now let's try to make this idea more practical.

We have spoken in the past about how we each need to utilize our strongest quality. After the first step, which is to identify our strongest power, the second step is to clarify what we need to do with our strongest power: to know how to use it, and what we want to use it for. After that, there is a third step: to think how we can practically go about actualizing our strongest quality.

(We cannot go that much into the details about each of the steps here, because each person is different when it comes to the strongest quality. So we have left it at the general outline for each person.)

When we are living like this, we are living aligned with our souls, and we will mainly be using our strongest quality and actualizing it [and this will be a source of inner joy to us].

Joy From The Outside Vs. Joy From The Inside

The Gemara teaches that a person prefers one measurement of his own land that he worked on, rather than 90 measurements of land from another's.^[2] [2] But if a person has a great desire for money, he will find it very difficult to understand this statement of the Gemara. Such a person desires more and more possessions and acquisitions, whether they are his, or another's. Why? This is because the Sages teach that the trait of desire is one of the things that remove a person from his own world: "Jealousy, desire and honor remove a person from his world."^[3] [3] When any of these negative traits dominate a person, the person is living externally and very superficially. Such a person has a superficial perspective, and therefore his joy does not come from his own inner world, but from the external world. That is why he will find it very hard to understand why a person would desire his own land more than another's.

Here is another example, which is very important, and also very subtle. It illustrates the idea very well. Every person has times of *simchah* in his life, such as the birth of a child, making a *bar mitzvah* or *bas mitzvah*, marrying off a child, having a grandchild, etc. Certainly, these are true times of joy in one's life. However, this is a joy of "going outward" from oneself. It is a joy of connecting to

something outside of us. Why? Our children are not *us*. They are external to us. Certainly we feel very connected with our children, and we feel as if our children are a part of us, but ultimately, our children are separate beings from us and they are independent from us.

In contrast to the joy we experience upon the birth or a celebration of our children, there is a deeper kind of joy, which we can derive from our own inner self. We can derive this inner joy when we understand how to use our strongest quality. When we do so, we are using our soul's **earth-of-water-of-earth**.

Now, let us ask: What makes us happier? When we utilize our potential, or when we celebrate in the joy of others, such as when we make a wedding for our children? When is our happiness greater? When we rejoice from a source within us, or when we rejoice in something outside of us?

Of course, there is a high level of feeling others' joy even more than our own joy. We are not addressing this high level. For most people, who are not that high level, what is their greatest joy? Is it a joy that comes from within them, or is it the joy that they get from their children? The truer kind of joy is the joy experienced from one's own inner world, whereas the joy of a birth of a child is external and not as deep as the joy that one gets from within.

For anyone who is not in touch with themselves, this will be very difficult to hear. But for someone who is in touch with his inner world, this will make a lot of sense.

There is an inner, subtle perspective of the soul, which is that the true source of joy comes from within ourselves. That is our true source of vitality and joy: when our joy comes from within ourselves.

Our children come from our body, and only minimally from our souls. Our children are very connected to our physical being, but not that much with our spiritual being. Since we are physically connected with our children, there is some degree of joy which we have in their joy. But for the most part, the joy we can get from within our very own selves - from our inner power and capabilities of the soul - is a much more inner and deeper kind of joy, because it is *us*.

Egoistic Joy Vs. Joy From Within

Let's explain the subtle difference between egoistic joy, versus the inner joy we are describing.

An egoist has joy only when it's about him. If it somehow relates to him, he will have joy. The joy begins with him and ends with him. This is impaired, egoistic joy. In contrast, true inner joy begins with actualizing one's potential, and it is a joy that continues and expands.

To illustrate the idea, the Rambam says that one's joy on Yom Tov is not complete unless he makes others happy, such as by inviting the poor to feast with him. This is a joy that starts with oneself [celebrating with oneself and with one's own family] which is being extended to others [the poor].

Pursuing Our True Source of Joy

Many people pursue money all day, because they think that this will be the true source that will give them happiness. On the same level, we should pursue a joy that comes from within ourselves - because that is where our true source of joy is. In the same way that people seek vanities and pursue them endlessly, we should seek the true source of joy: the joy that comes from actualizing our inner potential. This is the power which we can derive from our soul's **earth-of-water [of earth]**.

Aseres Y'mei Teshuvah: Days of Seeking To Actualize Our True Potential

The days of repentance between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, are days when we should become clearer about our souls, and that is what ultimately leads us to true *teshuvah*. We each need to see what our most positive quality is, and how we can actualize it. Accordingly, we can then set goals in our *avodas Hashem* for the coming year, in a way that will be more aligned with our personal soul. Then we will be able to find true joy, and to reach our true selves.

May we all merit to be sealed for a good year, for with You is the source of life. May we draw forth our true source of vitality and joy from the true Source of life, Hashem.

Q&A With The Rav

Q1: *The strongest power we have – which realm of the soul is this in? In the realm of action, emotion, etc.?*

A: Every soul is different. Some are stronger in action, some are stronger in emotion, and others are stronger in the area of thought. Clarifying this area is a part of clarifying our souls.

Q2: *If someone is stronger in the area of action, does that mean he is more obligated in the mitzvos, whereas others who are not as strong in the area of action aren't as obligated in mitzvos?*

A: Everyone is obligated in the *mitzvos*. But some people have souls which are rooted in the realm of action, which is *Asiyah* (action), while others are rooted in the realm of feeling, which is called *Yetzirah*, and others in the realm of thought, *Beriah*. Those are the three main kinds of people we find. Those whose souls are rooted in *Asiyah* are stronger in the area of action, but every Jew is still obligated in the *mitzvos*, even if his soul is not rooted in the realm of *Asiyah*.

Q3: *I am not sure if my strongest power is organization or loving and caring about others. How can I figure out what the strongest of my powers is?*

A: Figure out what you would do if you were in a situation where you would have to choose between organization or caring about others.

Q4: *I would pick love and caring about others, at the expense of organizing.*

A: Does the love stem from organization or does it flow instinctively with no restraint?

Q5: *It is definitely a love that stems from helping others get more organization in their lives.*

A: Is there any kind of organization to this love, or does it come impulsively and without any restraint? For example, is it a specific kind of love, for certain kinds of people, such as a love for children or a love for friends or neighbors? Or is it a love with no boundaries?

Q6: *It is a love that comes from an intellectual place not from an emotional place. It is a love to help others, wherever I go, whenever I feel a need to show this love to others.*

A: What do you do if you are forced to choose between love or organization? What is harder for you to stomach – when others are egoists and they don't care about others, or when they are not organized?

Q7: *When I see others who are not loving, this bothers more than when people are not organized.*

A: From all of your answers it seems that your ability to love is your strongest quality.

Q8: *What is a good goal I can set so that I can use my strongest power (in my case, my strongest power I identify is my power to love)?*

A: Take one person you love only a little bit, and begin to increase your love towards him/her. Don't only express love to someone you already love. Take someone you love a little, but whom you don't express love to, and begin increasing your love towards him.

Q9: *How can be I get joy out of my main ability in a way that doesn't make me egoistic and channel it more for Hashem?*

A: The above answer helps you use your power of love for *avodas Hashem*. On a subtler level, there is also *shelo lishmah* and *lishmah* in this *avodah* of loving others.

Q10: *How do you increase love towards another person? By doing things for others?*

A: There are external and internal ways to love others. On the external level, you need to do actions for others, but internally, you need to do things for others out of a feeling of love for another. On a higher level, you can make sure give a little more than you originally wanted to give to the other. Do so with the intention of increasing your love to another. After you are doing that, you can progress to a higher level: you can think of how bad it is to only love yourself and to not love others. Even more so, you can think of the other's good qualities and thereby awaken a love for him. On the highest level, awaken your love for all of the souls of *Klal Yisrael*.

Q11: *Is this avodah (actualizing my strongest area) also connected with the avodah that we have during the days of the Yomim Noraim?*

A: A person is judged on Rosh HaShanah for how much he actualized his potential. A sin, in essence, is a result of misused potential. On the external level, we need to do *teshuvah* during the *Yomim Noraim* and to stop doing the actions of sin, but along with this *avodah*, in our inner world, we need to get to the root of our sins – misusing our powers – and therefore, our inner *avodah* when doing *teshuvah* is to learn how to actualize our powers for the right reasons.

Q12: *Are we able to determine our strongest point by knowing what our biggest challenge is?*

A: That can only be a 'partial' proof, but it is not total proof, of what your strongest area is. Just because you have a struggle in this area does not necessarily mean that your strongest power lies in that area. A person may struggle in certain areas because he is affected by sins committed in previous lifetimes, and he will continue to struggle with those sins or areas in his current lifetime, until he repairs them, but these challenges do not necessarily show a person what his or her strongest point is. R' Tzadok of Lublin does write in the name of the *Arizal* that a person's main challenge on this world is with the sin that he committed in a previous lifetime, but this is still not proof as to what a person's strongest point in.

Q13: *I'm a bit confused. In previous classes the Rav has been explaining how joy is derived from the element of earth. In this class the Rav seems to be saying that joy comes from the element of water. Does joy come from the element of earth or water?*

A: The general source of joy is in the element of earth, the force that actualizes our potential. The 16 different kinds of joy which we are in the middle of discussing all come from the element of earth. Before this lesson, there were 4 lessons about the joy which comes from branches of "earth"-of-earth, and next 4 classes are about the joy that comes from branches of water-of-earth. After discussing the 4 kinds of joy that come from water-of-earth, we will then progress to explain the joy that comes from "wind"-of-earth, and then "fire"-of-earth. Earth is the general root of joy, and it divides into 16 types,

with 4 general categories: earth-of-earth, water-of-earth, wind-of-earth, and fire-of- earth. The first lesson (chapter 2) was about earth-of-earth-of-earth, the second lesson was about water-of-earth-of-earth, the third lesson was about wind-of-earth-of-earth, the fourth lesson was about fire-of-earth-of-earth, and the fifth lesson (this one) was about earth-of-water-of-earth.

May you all be written and sealed for a *gmar chasimah tovah*, and to merit a general salvation and a personal salvation.

[1] [4] Tehillim 36:1

[2] [5] Bava Metzia 38a

[3] [6] Avos 4:21

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/joy-four-elements-006-joy-continuous-actualization>

Links

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

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/placed%20on%20new%20site/ENGLISH%20placed%20on%20site/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%20%20%D7%94%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%94%20%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%AA%20%20%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8%20%20%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%94/Joy%20From%20The%204%20Elements%2006.%20Joy%20From%20Continuous%20Actualization.docx#_ftn1

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

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/placed%20on%20new%20site/ENGLISH%20placed%20on%20site/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%20%20%D7%94%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%94%20%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%AA%20%20%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8%20%20%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%94/Joy%20From%20The%204%20Elements%2006.%20Joy%20From%20Continuous%20Actualization.docx#_ftn2

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

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/placed%20on%20new%20site/ENGLISH%20placed%20on%20site/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%20%20%D7%94%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%94%20%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%AA%20%20%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8%20%20%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%94/Joy%20From%20The%204%20Elements%2006.%20Joy%20From%20Continuous%20Actualization.docx#_ftn3

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

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/placed%20on%20new%20site/ENGLISH%20placed%20on%20site/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%20%20%D7%94%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%94%20%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%AA%20%20%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8%20%20%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%94/Joy%20From%20The%204%20Elements%2006.%20Joy%20From%20Continuous%20Actualization.docx#_ftnref1

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

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/placed%20on%20new%20site/ENGLISH%20placed%20on%20site/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%20%20%D7%94%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%94%20%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%AA%20%20%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8%20%20%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%94/Joy%20From%20The%204%20Elements%2006.%20Joy%20From%20Continuous%20Actualization.docx#_ftnref2

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

ACTIVE/BILVAVI/UPLOAD%20TO%20WEBSITE/placed%20on%20new%20site/ENGLISH%20placed%20on%20site/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA%20%20%D7%94%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%94%20%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%AA%20%20%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8%20%20%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%94/Joy%20From%20The%204%20Elements%2006.%20Joy%20From%20Continuous%20Actualization.docx#_ftnref3