



BILVAVI

FOUR ELEMENTS

ISSUE 004 ♦ 5784

BACKGROUND

Last week, Yaakov and Tzvi finished discussing the יסוד הרוח, and just began touching on the יסוד המים, which they defined as the יסוד which enables a person to connect to things outside of oneself.

מקורות ומקבילות למדוד זה:

מהות יסוד המים - ספר דע את נפשך פרק א' אות ה'. כח העונג שבנפש כח המחבר - שם פרק ח'. ההבדל בין אהבה לתאוה - ספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש עמו' 173-175. העונג והעמל שבאהבה - ספר דע את ביתך פרק י"א. ע"ע דברי הרמב"ם בספר המצוות מצוה ג' [אהבת ה'], "...עד שנשיגהו ונהנה בהשגתו בתכלית ההנאה, וזאת היא האהבה המחוייבת". [נביא כאן תוספת ממורינו הרב בענין התענוג הנולד מתנועת יסוד הרוח, וז"ל: שורש הרוח בעתיק. רוח - עתיק. רוח מרוח - אריך. עתיק מקור התענוג, אולם זה תענוג שלא תמיד במודעות. אולם פעמים רבות זה תענוג במודעות, כגון תנועה של שעשוע אצל ילדים, כגון נדנדה.]

FRIENDS SCHMOOZE EXTENDED INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Yaakov: *Since last week I've been quite curious to figure out what the יסוד המים could be... Lichorah I would think that if somebody would come over to me and start to describe to me what one of the four most basic aspects of my personality are, it shouldn't be so hard for me to figure out what they're talking about...*

Tzvi: So nu, what did you come up with? You figured it out yet?

Yaakov: *I don't know, not really... I mean, we said that the יסוד המים in a person is what makes him feel emotionally connected to things, and we gave the example of ישראל, where a person forms an emotional connection to others. Now when I try to relate this concept to myself, I certainly do identify with feeling connected to others, but I wouldn't say that I feel a drive inside of me pushing me to connect to others... It's more like that I feel connected to people who I like, which are usually people who are my type or who are pleasant to be around.*

Tzvi: Well let's say one day for some reason you would be home all alone, with no one around to talk to or keep you company - wouldn't you feel lonely?

Yaakov: *Of course. But feeling lonely is very different than let's say when we discussed someone who sits still for too long without moving. If I sit still for too long, I feel like*

I need to move, I can't sit anymore. But feeling lonely is just sort of depressing, not geshmak... It seems like a whole different type of feeling. Are you telling me that I have a need for friends the same way I have a need for movement? Is this the definition of the יסוד המים?

Tzvi: On some level, every person does have a need for friends which stems from the יסוד המים, so you can't say that this definition is wrong. However, you are also right that there is a big difference between a person's need for movement and a person's need for friends and other emotional connections. Both of these are emotional needs of a person, but that doesn't mean that a person feels them the same way. For example, let's take a person's physical needs. In order to live, a person needs oxygen and he needs water. Are these two needs identical?

Yaakov: *Certainly not - a person needs to breath every second, whereas he only needs to drink a few times a day.*

Tzvi: Exactly. But there's also more than that: A person who holds his breath for a bit too long starts to feel desperate for air. On the other hand, how does a person who didn't drink for a while feel?

Yaakov: *He feels thirsty...*

Tzvi: Exactly. A first he just feels a little

thirsty, but imagine a person who comes in all sweaty from doing some heavy shlepping in the heat of the summer... He feels like his whole body is thirsting for water, and he starts imagining and picturing how drinking that water will be so geshmak, mamash **על נפש כמים קרים** עיפה...

Yaakov: Yes, I know exactly what you're talking about...

Tzvi: And how does a person feel on a fast day, when he's low on water and can't drink now?

Yaakov: He feels worn out, kind of tired and low on energy...

Tzvi: Exactly. So now here's the point: this is exactly how it is with the **ארבעה יסודות**, on an emotional level. The **יסוד הרוח** is like breathing - you usually don't really feel it at all. Just like you breathe subconsciously, and even when you breathe consciously you don't feel it that much, the same is with the **יסוד הרוח** - it's a power of movement which you just do naturally. The **יסוד המים**, on the other hand, creates an emotional thirst, which is just like the body's thirst for physical water.

Yaakov: But this is the point I'm having a hard time relating to - I can't say I really feel such an emotional "thirst" for having friends...

Tzvi: Let's take it step by step. The thirst of the **יסוד המים** is not just about having friends - it's about experiencing life in general. There are different ways people go through life. Unfortunately, some people live their lives somewhat robotically - they have their daily schedule, their life is

stuck in some sort of routine, and they just keep going - "**מצות אנשים**" "מלומדה". The thirst of the **יסוד המים** is the exact opposite of this. It's a thirst to experience life, to connect to whatever it is that I'm doing, to live it up, to enjoy it.

Yaakov: And what about someone who lives more of a routine type of life, where does his **יסוד המים** come in and express itself?

SUMMARY OF SCHMOOZE

- ◆ **יסוד הרוח** - a drive for movement
- ◆ **יסוד המים** - a thirst to connect to people / *avodas Hashem* / *d'veikus ba'Hashem* / life in general
This connection comes about through pleasure. Rule: There's no such thing as a real connection without pleasure.
- ◆ The **יסוד המים** is expressed through the **מידות** **אהבה** - love, and **תאוה** - desire for pleasure.
- ◆ The definition of **אהבה** - a true connection which encompasses a full relationship, where the pleasure is only a part of the picture, and it is there in order to forge the connection and not for its own sake.
- ◆ The definition of **תאוה** - seeking pleasure for its own sake.

Tzvi: In order to see where someone's **יסוד המים** expresses itself, you have to see what he gets his enjoyment from. There's nobody who goes through life without any enjoyment. The **יסוד המים** in a person thirsts for enjoyment, and that's what keeps a person going.

Yaakov: Do you mean to say that just like a person can't go too long without water, in the same way he can't go too long without getting enjoyment? That

sounds like a bit of a חידוש...

Tzvi: That's what I'm saying, 100%. A person who does not enjoy what he's doing gets burnt out, and there's a limit to how long a person can go on in such a state. Ultimately a person is not a robot - he needs to get some level of enjoyment from what he's doing to keep him going.

Yaakov: I hear... But I'm sort of losing our train of thought. We started off that the **יסוד המים** is about forming relationships with other people. Now you seem to be explaining the **יסוד המים** in a different way altogether - it's a person's thirst to get enjoyment in life. This is certainly something that I can relate to very well, but what does this have to do with what we started off with?

Tzvi: Let me explain. In general, the **יסוד המים** expresses itself through two very central **מידות** in a person, **אהבה** and **תאוה**. In our speech, we often interchange between these concepts. For example, I can say that I love my children, and I can also say that I love pizza. In the **תורה**, however, it is clear that these are two very different concepts, one which is called **אהבה** and one which is called **תאוה**. So in order to better understand the **יסוד המים**, we need to analyze these **מידות**, and we need to understand what the difference is between **אהבה** and **תאוה**.

Yaakov: It's like the well-known question, when a person says he loves fish, you ask, "if you love fish, why do you eat them - don't you feel bad for them?"

Tzvi: Right, exactly.

Yaakov: So lichorah if you would ask

me, I would say the difference is that when a person loves fish, he really just loves himself. Since the fish tastes good, and eating it gives him pleasure, he loves eating fish, but he doesn't really love the fish per se at all. On the other hand, when a person loves his children, he has an intrinsic love for them. It's not just that they give him pleasure - I guess the point is that there's an אהבה שאינה תלויה בדבר, an unconditional love between a parent and child.

Tzvi: What you're saying is true, but there's a subtle point here which we have to understand, and that is what the role of pleasure is in a relationship. So far, we learnt about two יסודות in a person, the יסוד הרוח, and the יסוד המים. The יסוד הרוח in a person causes movement, whereas the יסוד המים in a person thirsts for pleasure and enjoyment. The proper usage of these יסודות is, that a person should channel his movement towards doing 'רצון ה' - such as learning תורה and doing mitzvos - לשם שמים. However, even when he is using his יסוד הרוח to do his avodas Hashem לשם שמים, it is still very important that he should use his יסוד המים to enjoy and connect to his עבודת ה'. This is a necessary and crucial component to Avodas Hashem - that a person should enjoy his עבודה and derive a deep sense of fulfillment and satisfaction from his learning, mitzvos, and connection to Hashem.

Yaakov: Why is this so important? What's so wrong if a person does everything right, down to the last detail, without getting an especial feeling of enjoyment and self-fulfillment from his עבודת ה'?

Tzvi: The problem is because a person's inner connection to something comes only through pleasure and enjoyment. The יסוד

המים, which yearns for pleasure, is also what creates a bond and attachment in a person's heart to other things. Take for example physical water: When you make a dough, the flour is made up of millions of separate tiny particles. What binds them together? The water. The same is true with cement - it's the liquid which causes the particles to come together. And just like this is true on a physical level, it's true on an emotional level - the יסוד המים is what forms every bond and relationship in a person's heart. Until a person enjoys something, he doesn't feel connected to it. Once he gets pleasure from it, the pleasure creates a connection in his heart.

Yaakov: You can't feel connected to something without getting pleasure from it?

Tzvi: No, you can't. Every emotional connection comes from the יסוד המים which bonds things together through pleasure. You can choose to perform your avodas Hashem לשם שמים through the יסוד הרוח, but to emotionally connect to it you will need to enjoy it, through the יסוד המים. And therefore, getting back to your question above what the thirst for enjoyment has to do with looking for friends and forging relationships, here is the answer. On a superficial level, the יסוד המים looks for pleasure simply for the sake of pleasure, and that's called תאוה. But on a deeper level, the יסוד המים looks to connect to and unite with Hashem and with all the good in Creation. This sense of unity and connection is no less pleasurable - and actually far more pleasurable - than any תאוה, and the יסוד המים thirsts for this pleasurable אהבה in a somewhat similar fashion that a בעל תאוה thirsts for his תאוה.

Yaakov: So what's the difference between the two?

Tzvi: The difference is that when the יסוד המים is looking for true אהבה, it is looking for a true, real relationship, which is on the one hand extremely pleasurable, but on the other hand is not only about pleasure. Every true relationship comes along with hard work as well: There is a sense of responsibility and dedication, and a relationship means to take the full picture. This is ultimately the difference between אהבה and תאוה - a בעל התאוה is looking only for pleasure, whereas a person seeking אהבה is looking for a full relationship, in which the pleasure involved is only a part of the picture. Such a person wants pleasure only as a means to get connect, and is not looking to get pleasure which will not bring about a deeper connection.

Yaakov: Okay - I'm sure that after I go over this I'll have some questions, but for now I think that I at least got a much better picture of what the יסוד המים is.

Tzvi: Very good. There is definitely still a lot more which we'll need to cover on the יסוד המים, but B'ezras Hashem if we keep going step by step, we'll get there, slowly but surely!



FUNDAMENTALS OF MIDDOS IMPROVEMENT

2) TRAINING OURSELVES TO BECOME CLEAR.

The second point we need to understand about these *shiurim* is that at first, the things we hear about in these *shiurim* will not be perfectly understandable and clear to us.

When we learn a *sugya* of Gemara, we don't know about it, and we need to know what we are clear in and what we aren't clear in. When it comes to discussing *avodah*, these matters are not clear to us, because we are only aware of general terms that we have heard about; that is the first problem – *girsu d'yankusa*. But we have another disadvantage: we are missing familiarity of what it means to live in a “clear world.”

This stems from the fact that because we are used to general terms of *avodah*, we think we know these matters. We think we know what *chessed* is, what *zerizus* (zeal) is, etc. A child says that *zerizus* is to do things quickly, and an adult often has the same understanding as the child. The knowledge of it is in very ‘general’ terms. We open a *Mesillas Yesharim* and we learn about *zerizus*, and it seems that we know what it is, and that we are just not acting enough upon that knowledge.

But the truth is that we don't even know what it is unless we have learned about it in-depth. We are not clear about it. It seems to us that we are clear about it, but we are not.

Sometimes we see a noted speaker who comes to deliver a *shiur*. If he is giving a *shiur* on the Gemara, only adults can understand, not children. But when a speaker comes to give a *shiur* to children and he talks about self-improvement and

middos, we can see adults listening in too - and their understanding of the *shiur* is often on the same level of understanding as the children. This is because when it comes to matters of *avodah*, an adult's understanding is often not that different than a child's understanding. This all results from not living in a “clear world.”¹

Therefore, the second purpose of listening to these *shiurim* is to get used to living in a “clear world”. When you learn Gemara, you need to give *seder* (order) and *birur* (clarity) to the many *shitos* (opinions/views) of what you are learning about; in *cheshbon* (review of the body of the material) and in *sevara* (logic). So too, in learning about *avodah*, you need to get used to giving *seder* and *birur* to these matters, and that is how you learn these matters in-depth. (You need to give *seder* just through your using your *seichel* (intellect) alone, at first.)

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST TWO STEPS.

So the first part of this is to acquire a way to think, and the second part of this is to give *seder* (orderliness) and *behirus* (clarity) to these matters. The first part is to hear more and more *shiurim*, so that you can simply absorb. The second part is more difficult: it takes real learning.

The first part slowly develops

¹ *Pesachim 50a*: “You see a clear world.” (The Rav often quotes this concept of *behirus* (clarity), also called “*olam barur*” (clear world), as a fundamental in our *avodah*: that we must learn how to gain clarity in matters. See also “Getting To Know Your Inner World_01_The Roots of Our Inner World and “Getting To Know Your Happiness_011_Happiness For The Entire Year).

your mind, with the more you hear and absorb. But the second part requires you to actually learn about these matters. It is much deeper than the first part. We need both of these steps together when we begin these *shiurim*.

Of course, you won't be able to understand everything, just as you can't understand an entire *sugya* in all its details. But you need to get to the roots of these matters as much as you can.

We need both of these steps together, when we begin these *shiurim*. Every person therefore will need to see which step he is personally holding by: “Am I at the first step, or at the second?”

At the first step, one is listening to these *shiurim* so that he can absorb, and the intention is not to try to understand these matters fully; and he surely can't attempt at trying to work on these matters. It can happen that a person gets confused as he is in the first step. One who passes the first stage, though, and feels that he has acquired a way to think, can now proceed to learn about these matters in-depth, in all the details, *sugya* after *sugya*, with clarity.

In the second step, one still cannot arrive at the practical conclusions yet on how he should act. It is simply unrealistic to try to work on all of these matters at once, even if you were to understand all of them in all their details.

3. UNDERSTANDING MATTERS OF “AVODAH” REQUIRES A FUSION OF “INTELLECT” AND “HEART”.

The third part we will need is deeper. There is a big difference between learning Gemara and

learning about *avodah*. The two steps we mentioned thus far are similar both when it comes to learning Gemara as well as when it comes to learning about *avodah*. But the third part which we will need is unique to *avodah*.

When learning Gemara, your understanding is based on *seichel* (intellect). It can be either human logic, or it can be the higher logic that comes from the *neshamah* for those who merit it², but either way, it is the mode of the *seichel* intellect. But learning about *avodah* requires a fusion [of both “intellect” and “heart”].

If someone just learns the *kelalim* (general rules) of *avodah* and he does not learn its *peratim* (details), he might be able to understand them in his heart as well as in his intellect, but he will only know the *kelalim*. But the inner kind of *avodah* is for one to know the *kelalim* and *peratim* of *avodah*, and it combines intellect with heart. It is not intellect alone, and it not emotions alone. It is a fusion of intellect and heart.

Most people do not know what this is. People usually think that being ‘strong in intellect’ means to be strong in learning Gemara, and that being ‘strong in heart’ means to be strong about *davening*...

I won’t get into whether this mentality is correct or not, but it is true that there are people who only excel at learning and not with *davening*, and vice versa. Most people identify learning and prayer as being two different times – “the time for Torah is one thing, and the time to pray is another thing”; the time to pray is usually seen as the time of the day in which pours out

² See *Tefillah* #052 – *Asking For Understanding*.

his heart’s emotions to Hashem). So the intellect and the feelings in the heart are usually seen by a person as separate functions of the psyche, and as a result of thinking this way, a person does not know how to fuse intellect and feeling together.

Inner *avodah*, though, requires one to fuse the modes of intellect and heart together. It is to understand things with a palpable awareness. This is a deep concept: it is to have awareness towards a concept, which can be palpably felt.

Herein lays the reason why it is difficult for one to enter the depth of *avodah*. Most people recognize a concept either on an intellectual level or on an emotional level, whereas palpable awareness to a concept is rare.

The concepts we are discussing here are subtle. If someone has an intellect capable of plumbing to the deepest subtleties, he can keep listening to one subtle point after another. But intellectual comprehension alone doesn’t mean that a person is experiencing what he knows.

When one makes sure to approach *avodah* with a feeling of awareness towards what he is learning, the person can feel the subtleties, the intellect sharpens the feelings, the feelings in turn sharpen the intellect, and the cycle repeats. This is the kind of ability we need in order to learn about improving in *avodah*.

When it comes to learning a *sugya* of Gemara, all we need is intellect to refine our subtle understandings we come across. But when it comes to *sugyos* of *avodah*, we need a fusion of intellectual sharpness as well emotional sharpness, which feed on each other.

FIXING YOUR FIRE

HATRED STEMMING FROM EARTH-OF-EARTH-OF-FIRE

THE SYMPTOMS

As mentioned, **earth-of-fire** is where it bothers a person when he is of lower status than another. This causes the heaviness of the element of earth to dominate, which can lead to either one of the two earth-traits, sadness and laziness.

The element of earth contains two properties: it is both dry and heavy. Dryness in the soul is an absence of vitality. The opposite of dryness, or absence of vitality, is moisture. [In the soul, moisture is synonymous with vitality]. The opposite of heaviness is being lightweight.

Earth-of-earth-of-fire is where the heaviness of earth dominates. The person sees that another person is of higher status than he, and he feels, “He’s higher, and I’m lower”, so he becomes lazy and stops trying to succeed, and he gives up at succeeding because he is focused on his lowly situation as a result of seeing that the other is higher than him. This makes him heavily connected to his element of earth. The more that the other is succeeding and rising higher in his status, the more my hatred for him increases, and this makes me become very connected to my element of earth, to the point that any thought about my friend’s success makes me feel like a machine that has stopped working. This happens as a result of becoming so connected to the heaviness and the dryness of the element of earth.

If this further results in increased heaviness (*laziness*), it is **earth-of-earth-of-earth-of-fire**. If it results in a loss of vitality, it is **water-of-earth-of-earth-of-fire**.

I have a very creative nature, and they very often get all sorts of novel ideas which I think have a lot of potential. These could be ideas of inventions or business ideas which can make money, or sometimes ideas of how to help people, or how to inspire people to grow. But most often, what ends up is that these ideas just leave me feeling frustrated, because I don't usually have the means or support necessary to bring my ideas to fruition. How can I look at this situation using the four elements system?

Answer: From the perspective of the *ארבעה יסודות*, the nature to be creative generally stems from the *יסוד האש*. The *יסוד האש* gives a person the capacity to break boundaries. This capacity can allow a person to throw away his small-mindedness of being limited to what he is used to, and allows him to think big, in an out-of-the-box way. In this context, the opposite of this power comes from the *יסוד העפר*, which has the ability to create boundaries and limit a person to a fixed way of thinking.

When it comes to your situation, the first thing is that it is important for you to realize how this power of thinking out-of-the-box can be of tremendous benefit. Very often, there are simple changes people can make in their lives which would help them tremendously,

yet they never think to help themselves, simply because they are stuck in their situation and can't think beyond their routine.

Nevertheless, it is also important for you to understand the role of the *יסוד האש* in the greater picture of life. In order to live a balanced life, the general rule is that a person has to make much more use of the nature to "stick to the rules" - using the *יסוד העפר* - rather than the "breaking the rules" nature of the *יסוד האש*. For example, when it comes to a business investment, you may have an extremely lucrative idea which you see as posing almost no risk, and you'll want to invest all your money in it. This attitude comes from the *יסוד האש*, which doesn't want to be limited by the norm, by what's tried and true, etc. However, the general rule in life is that such an approach may succeed every now and then, but overall the vast majority of people who take on such an approach will fail. The bottom line is that this world is built primarily on set rules, which only from time to time can be successfully circumvented.

What then is the proper place for using this out-of-the-box nature? It is generally meant to be used in setting your overall goal and aspirations in life. When you set out, you should think big. Free yourself from all limitations, and think what you would really want to do

if you were not limited. This will help you discover your inner nature and dreams, and will give you the proper general goal and direction. But then, as a second step, you have to accept that in practice, you will generally only be able to implement a small part of your full dream. If you realize that this is the ideal way of how Hashem created the world, that you should first dream big and then limit your dreams to the limitations of life, this should help you put things in perspective.

Additionally, you should try to make use of your creative nature on a constant basis in a more subtle way. For example, you may enjoy creative arts, such as creative drawing or writing, and there are many opportunities in life of how to bring out your creativity on a smaller, day-to-day level. You can write someone a creative letter, decorate a present in a creative way, etc. The more you bring out your creativity in a positive, beneficial manner, the more fulfillment and enjoyment you will have from what you do, and this should help calm the feelings of frustration you described. *Hatzlachah Rabbah!*

[For more on this topic, see "Getting to Know Yourself", Part One, chapter Ten and also *ספר דע את נשמתך, פרק יב אות כד*.]

ארבעת היסודות בלשון רבותינו - מדברי הרמב"ן

[מסביר שבפסוק השני שבתורה מבואר בריאת ארבעת היסודות, ושקדם להם בריאת חומר "היולי" ואלו הד' הם הצורות שניתנו לו. עוד מסביר כי האש היסודית חשוכה, וכי יסוד הרוח הוא בעצם יותר דק ולמעלה מכולם, רק שבמאמרו של הקב"ה הוא נכנס בין יסודות המים והאש.]

ואחר שאמר כי בתחילה - במאמר אחד ברא אלהים השמים והארץ וכל צבאם, חזר ופירש, כי הארץ אחר הבריאה הזו היתה "תהו", כלומר, חומר אין בו ממש; והיתה "בהו", כי הליביש אותה צורה. ופירש שבצורה הזו צורת ד' יסודות, שהם האש והמים והעפר והאוויר, ומלת "הָאָרֶץ" תכלול ארבעת אלה. והאש נקראת "חֶשֶׁן", מפני שהאש היסודית חשוכה; ואלו היתה אדומה, היתה מאדימה לנו הלילה. והמים שנגבל בהם העפר יקרא "תְּהוֹם"... והאוויר יקרא "רוּחַ". וכבר נודע כי היסודות הארבעה - מקשה אחת, והעמוד שלה הוא עיגול הארץ. והמים מקיפין על הארץ, והאוויר מקיף על המים, והאש מקיף על האוויר... וסמך "הרוח" ל"אלהים", בעבור שהיא דקה מכולם, ולמעלה מהם, רק שהיא מרחפת על פני המים במאמרו של הקב"ה. (רמב"ן עה"ת, בראשית א' א).

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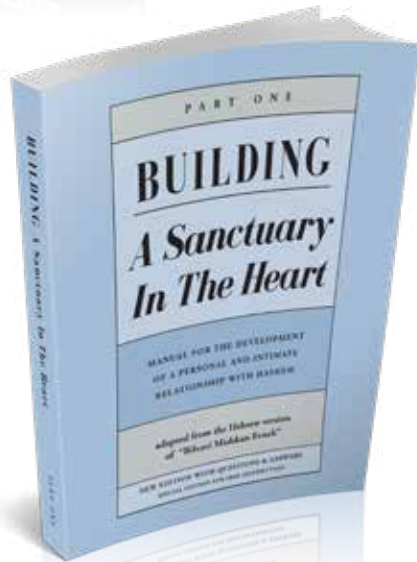
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 לקבלת העלון השבועי בפקס
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הדפסה של 1000 - נותרו 10 עותקים



2000 printed- 800 remaining



הדפסה של 500 - נותרו 30 עותקים



הדפסה של 4000 - נותרו 100



הדפסה של 500 - נותרו 10 עותקים

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Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh
tel 052.763.8588
fax: 03-5480529

Conceived, edited & published
by the Bilvavi Four Elements
Approach under the exclusive
supervision of the Rav, Shlit"a

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