


BILVAVI

FOUR ELEMENTS

ISSUE 005 ♦ 5784

BACKGROUND

Last week, Yaakov and Tzvi discussed the **יסוד המים**, which they defined as the **יסוד** in a person which creates his thirst for pleasurable connections and relationships. They clarified that positive pleasure is when the pleasure is there to enhance the relationship, whereas negative pleasure is when the relationship is there only to enhance the pleasure.

מקורות ומקבילות שיחת הברית

ההתמקדות על חיובי מול שלילי והאמור נה בחיובי - ספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש (עמוד' 512-612, ועמוד' 291-391).

הסיבה למה השלילי יותר גלוי - ספר

עלי שור (ח"א, שער ג', מערכה א', פ"ט).

ביאור סוגית מידת האהבה - ע"פ ספר דע את נפשך פרק י"א.

[הוספה ממז"ר בהבדל שבין אהבה תלויה בדבר ואהבה שאינו תלויה בדבר: באהבה שאינה תלויה בדבר, העיקר האחדות, ומתלוות לה תענוג והנאה (תאוה).

לעומת כך באהבה שתלויה בדבר, העיקר התענוג והנאה (תאוה) שנוגדת מן החיבור והאחדות, אולם אין האחדות עיקר. אולם אחדות לשם הנאה בלבד, אינו אהבה כלל. ובלשון אחר, אהבה - לשמה, תאוה - שלא לשמה.]

FRIENDS SCHMOOZE EXTENDED INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Tzvi: So where are you holding, Yaakov? You got last week's discussion straight? When we ended off it sounded like there might be some questions coming...

Yaakov: *Actually, there are... But it's not that I didn't get what we learnt last time. Before last week, I can't say I ever really thought too deeply into defining what אהבה is, what תאוה is, or what pleasure is, and certainly not what these three have to do with each other! Now, throughout my day I'm trying to figure out each time which one I'm using. So I think I'm definitely heading in the right direction...*

Tzvi: No question, of course!

Yaakov: *Well, that being said... I also am starting to come to the painful realization that most of the time that I'm using my יסוד המים it's more for תאוה than for anything else... I mean, this much is for sure - throughout the last week I definitely caught myself many times being drawn after pleasure for the sake of pleasure, but I can't really say how many times I felt myself being pulled after pleasure for any other reason...*

Tzvi: Let take what you just said slowly. You said that you're coming to realize that you use your **יסוד המים** mainly in a negative way, for **תאוה** rather than for **אהבה**, and that this realization is painful. This brings us to a very important point in the whole derech of the **ארבעה יסודות** - the importance of focusing on the positive before the negative. In order to be successful at actually getting to know yourself, perfecting your **מידות**, and coming close to ה' through learning the **ארבעה יסודות**, it is very important for most people to start off with a big focus on

learning their positive **מידות** before they start learning their negative **מידות**.

Yaakov: *Why is that?*

Tzvi: Because like you said, becoming aware of your negative **מידות** is painful, and a person who starts out focusing on the negative, runs a very big risk of just causing himself to give up very quickly. You have to realize that learning the **יסודות** with a focus on discovering your faults would be extremely intense. It means walking away from every conversation with another painful discovery of something I have to fix in myself. In order to be able to keep up at such an intense program, a person would have to have a super-intense personality, or he would have to be extremely truthful with himself and committed to growing. For most of us, however, such a program is simply too intense.

Yaakov: *I definitely agree! But what then is the solution? I mean, what if I really am using my יסוד המים just for תאוה - am I simply supposed to skip learning about the יסוד המים?*

Tzvi: No, not at all. You have to set out with the goal of mainly focusing on the areas where you use your **יסוד המים** in a positive way, working with the **הנחה** and **אמונה** that they do exist and that you will be able to find them.

Yaakov: *What is this אמונה based on? Who can guarantee that I use my יסוד המים properly?*

Tzvi: It's very simple - every person is made up of a **נשמה** and a **גוף**. The body, by its very nature, is selfish, and when it

comes to the יסוד המים, it always pulls towards תאוה. The נשמה, on the other hand, is by its very nature selfless, and it always pulls towards אהבה and forming true relationships. So since you believe that you are made up of these two components, that means that no matter how much תאוה you have because of your body, you'll always have some אהבה left, from your נשמה.

Yaakov: *Very interesting. So why do I have such a hard time finding this אהבה?*

Tzvi: Because what's easier to find, the body or the נשמה? The body is what meets the eyes, while the נשמה is hidden inside! That's how it is with the body and נשמה themselves, and the same is true with their מידות.

Yaakov: *Okay... So what's the solution? What can I do to help me discover the אהבה within me?*

Tzvi: I want to discuss this, but maybe first try to explain yourself a little more: Why is it so hard for you to discover your אהבה? What about your friends, your family, your children, etc. - don't you love them?

Yaakov: *Of course if you ask me if I love them I'll say I love them. But when I try to honestly analyze my feelings and pinpoint when I feel this love and where it expresses itself, it's not so simple... Let's say with my friends, I usually call them either when I need something from them, or when I'm bored and want to schmooze - and I think they probably are the same way with me.*

Tzvi: I agree, but tell me - you don't feel like you have a relationship with them? You think it's just that each one tries to use the other to help him out when he needs help?

Yaakov: *Of course not! Certainly we have good relationships, and everything is mutual - none of us feels like the other is just taking advantage of them. This is how friends are - they*

help me when I need help, and I help them when they need help. But still, these relationships are much more technical...

Tzvi: I understand. To say it in my words, the feeling of אהבה of the יסוד המים is a pleasurable emotion, which the יסוד המים in a person thirsts for and which gives a person emotional energy and motivation. These relationships you're describing are

SUMMARY OF SCHMOOZE

- ◆ Important rule with the ארבעה יסודות - Always focus on the positive! *[Even though the negative is sometimes more apparent]*
- ◆ The middah of אהבה expresses itself on two levels: as a deeper אהבה, and as a more external אהבה.
- ◆ On an external level: By giving - doing הסד - and by receiving - הכרת הטוב - from one another. When you do these things with the intent of bringing out your inner feelings of אהבה, these feelings are actually awakened. This is called "אהבה התלויה בדבר".
- ◆ On a deeper level: When two people share a joint רצון, they come to sense their inner אהדות, which comes along with pleasurable feelings of אהבה. Such אהבה is called "אהבה שאינה תלויה בדבר".

much more dry, and if there's any feeling of pleasure involved, you feel like it's coming a lot more from your own תאוה for whatever you're gaining from the relationship, rather than from the enjoyable feeling of the relationship itself.

Yaakov: *Exactly! In general, it's hard for me to say when I feel these overall enjoyable feelings of אהבה and emotional connection that you are describing...*

Tzvi: And what about when you schmooze with your friends - that doesn't give you a feeling of connection?

Yaakov: *It depends when... Very often I feel like even schmoozing is much more a point of filling a mutual need that we each have, rather than necessarily feeling a close relationship...*

Tzvi: And let's say with your family and kids - lichorah there it should be much more simple. What exactly are your kids doing for you that should make you work so hard to take care of them? Lichorah everything you do for them all day is just because you love them!

Yaakov: *Even with my kids it's not so simple. I know that there are some parents in the world who are very loving and overall very positive, and when you walk into these homes there's a very loving atmosphere. But I'm more of a quiet type of personality, and I don't see myself expressing a major amount of emotion towards my kids every day. And as far as me taking care of them, it's hard to say that making my kids meals or giving them clean clothing is such a major expression of love for them - I mean, what else can I do? I should let them starve? You think I want to have them screaming and complaining all day?*

So of course, if I want to, I can say that no - I really love my friends, I really love my family, etc., and believe me - I really think that I do... But when it comes down to it, when I'm trying to define and identify where I feel this יסוד המים, the תאוה expresses itself clearly, whereas the אהבה is much harder to pinpoint...

Tzvi: So I think we first need to discuss the general picture of how אהבה works, and the clearer of a picture we get of אהבה in general, the easier it will be for you to identify the אהבה you have in your life. Basically the question boils down to

the fact that you can have two people helping each other out, yet that doesn't necessarily bring out real feelings of אהבה. So if helping each other is not the key to אהבה, then what exactly is the key to אהבה?

Yaakov: *I don't know... I think it's your turn to fill me in a little here...*

Tzvi: So let's try to define the way the sefarim explain how אהבה works, and this should help us gain a lot of clarity. Let's start with the point of friends helping each other out: There's a concept called נתנה - giving, or in other words, חסד - helping someone else out. Where in the תורה does it say that there's a mitzvah of חסד?

Yaakov: *I think the Rambam counts it as part of לרעך כמוך.*

Tzvi: Very good! So that means that giving to someone else is an expression of אהבה. The flipside of this concept is from the side of the person receiving the חסד or gift: his role is to have הכרת הטוב - to appreciate what he received from the other person. The goal over here is that he should appreciate not only the gift itself but also the אהבה that's behind the gift, and that should awaken in him the feeling of אהבה back to the giver. Like the passuk says, כמים הפנים אל פנים כן - when a person feels the love someone has for him, that naturally awakens love back. So this is how mutual giving to each other is supposed to work to bring to אהבה.

Yaakov: *But I don't understand something - where does it all start from? If I know that someone is giving me something out of אהבה I can love them back, but where does the first אהבה come from?*

Tzvi: Very good - here we're coming to the point we were missing. Everything we said until now about חסד and הכרת הטוב was all only the external layer of אהבה, the expressions of אהבה which can awaken the אהבה from the outside. Both giving and receiving can be external things which can express

and awaken feelings of אהבה. But from an inner perspective, there's an inner source where all these feelings come from, and that's what we need to learn now. The way the sefarim explain this is that "אהבה" is the same gematria as "אחד" - one. In other words, אהבה is the feeling of unity, of feeling one and identifying with the person you love.

Yaakov: *What exactly does it mean to feel "one" with someone else? How exactly can you define that?*

Tzvi: On a simple level, what it means is as follows: We discussed earlier how the יסוד המים comes after the יסוד הרוח. In regards to this discussion, this means as follows: When two people share the same רצון [from the יסוד הרוח] they feel united, and when this unity is taken to an emotional level, this creates אהבה. This is the inner source of אהבה. At its deepest level, this feeling of unity comes from feeling how all of our נשמות are intrinsically united within. However, on a simple level, we feel this unity primarily when two people share a common רצון and common ideals.

Yaakov: *So again, you're saying that there are two sources for אהבה, and inner source and an outer source. The inner source is from feeling like you share the same רצון, and the outer source is from giving and receiving from each other, or in other words helping each other out...*

Tzvi: Exactly.

Yaakov: *And how exactly are you explaining the combination of these two parts?*

Tzvi: In terms of the יסודות it works as follows: The deeper level of the יסוד המים is when it flows straight from the יסוד הרוח. For example, when a person feels a pure רצון to do ה' and fulfill his purpose in life, this is an expression of the יסוד הרוח. When he comes across someone else who shares the same ideals as him, and they feel how they share a mutual deep רצון, this creates an enjoyable feeling of אהבה, which unites them.

This is what's called שאינה תלויה אהבה בדבר - it's an אהבה which came from the inside outwards, an אהבה which does not depend on an external cause.

Yaakov: *And what is תלויה אהבה בדבר?*

Tzvi: תלויה אהבה בדבר is when a person knows that there is an inner אחדות, but this אחדות is hidden and not so tangible, and is not strong enough on its own to bring out these feelings of אהבה. Here is where the external side of חסד and הכרת הטוב come into play. These actions, when performed properly, can serve to "stoke the coals" and awaken the inner feelings of אהבה. It's like מתוך מתוך - through building the external connection of helping each other out, you can arouse the inner connection of אהבה as well.

Yaakov: *What do you mean "when performed properly" - what conditions are there?*

Tzvi: The main condition is very simple: that the acts of חסד should be done with a conscious awareness that their purpose is to awaken inner feelings of אהבה. Friends who help each other out with a conscious awareness that they are trying to express their inner אהבה, which ultimately stems from a shared purpose in life - will end up with a deep and fulfilling relationship. This won't feel similar at all to the technical, day-to-day relationship we described earlier.

Yaakov: Wow, this sounds amazing. I think we should stop here - there's plenty here for me to think about!

Tzvi: Sound great! I think next week we should try to see how the concept of אהבה can apply to אהבת התורה, ה', etc., which should help us finish the יסוד המים for now - remember, we still have two more יסודות to cover after יסודות!

Yaakov: Of course! I'm mamash looking forward!

FUNDAMENTALS OF MIDDOS IMPROVEMENT

3A) 'AVODAH' REQUIRES 'ADINUS' (REFINING OUR UNDERSTANDING) AND 'DAKUS' (NOTICING SUBTLETY)

In Gemara, one has to work on comprehending it according to his level of intellect. In avodah, one needs "adinus" (refinement of understanding) in order to comprehend the 'dakus' (subtleties) of these matters.¹

The baalei avodah (those Gedolim who taught about avodah) essentially used these abilities of 'adinus' and 'dakus' in order to approach matters of avodah. There is adinus within adinus (refinement within refinement) and dakus within dakus (subtlety within subtlety).

It's possible that a person reading the words of the baalei avodah doesn't see the adinus and dakus in their words, but that's only a superficial understanding. So we need to approach these matters with thought, but a more subtle kind of thought than how we learn Gemara: being aware of a concept intellectually, as well as being able to feel the concept. This ability will show you the dakus of every sugya in avodah.

Thus, it is difficult the first time we learn sugyos of avodah. Most people remain with the first step, learning how think of these matters; the second step,

¹ Editor's note: these concepts were first mentioned in Fixing Your Wind_003 (Living In Denial)

thinking into the details of each of these sugyos, is far from most people. And surely most people don't reach the third step, of being aware to these concepts with both intellect and feeling and developing the ability of adinus.

Therefore, it is very far from where we are actually holding. However, just as we learn Gemara as much as we can try to understand, so too when it comes to avodah, we must try as hard as we can. Obviously, if a person never decides to enter it, it never starts, because he remains where he is.

But if he enters it and progresses stage after stage, he begins to learn about these matters and think about them although he's not 'there' yet; 'sof maaseh b'machshavah techilah', as we explained.

This approach helps a person penetrate into avodah and experience the "clear world". He becomes clear in a way of thinking, in the rules and details of each sugya of avodah, and he becomes consciously aware of the ideas he is learning about. To a certain extent, this clarity will become sharpened more and more.

Therefore, one must be aware of the following facts throughout this series. There are two parts when it comes to learning

about matters of avodah: the knowledge about the rules (כללים) and the knowledge about the details (פרטים).

If one is only interested in knowing the general rules of avodah, then obviously, he doesn't get to the details. The inner perspective is to understand is that all of the details of avodah are contained within the rules of avodah. Therefore, one has to amass knowledge of the rules and details, all of them. The secret of inner avodah is to arrive at more and more refinement of understanding.

3B) FINDING YOUR WEAKEST TRAIT.

Even more so, each of our souls contains the four elements (earth, water, wind and fire), and each of us has a particular middah (trait) that dominates, which is causing all the problems. First one has to learn about the elements, and then identify which middos come from which elements.

We all have four elements, for good and bad. We have all good and bad middos in ourselves. Reb Yeruchem said that we are all like a full zoo, full of many wild animals. But we each have one particular bad middah\ element which is the main source of the problems.

If one doesn't work on getting

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

AS THE REMEDY

The way to repair hatred of earth-of-earth-of-fire is for a person to develop the awareness that he needs to be solidly anchored and solidified to his own internal world, and not involving/obsessing himself in another – not in the other's qualities, nor in the other's faults, not in another's achievements, nor in that person's failures. Rather, one must solidify himself within his own life, and as the Sages taught: "Therefore, man is created individual". All of a person's involvement must be focused on reaching the duty that man has in "his" world, as stated in the beginning of Mesilas Yesharim. That is the root of the remedy for hatred for another that comes from earth-of-fire-of-fire.

Man has two parts to his existence: (1) One's individual aspect. Man was created alone, symbolizing the "Yechidah" aspect of one's existence in which one is alone and there are no others. Avraham Avinu was an individual in the world serving the Creator, and so does every person have the ability to be connected to his individual existence alone and he doesn't look at what anyone else is doing, and he serves Hashem from this individual aspect of himself. (2) Companionship. Hashem created Chavah as a companion for Adam, because a person has to connect outward to another.

Connecting to others is meant to be done by using our element of water, which is able to nourish, give to, and love, others. This is the

ideal, healthy way of connecting to others which Hashem intended. In contrast to this, the ruined way of connecting to others is through fire: Enlarging one's own sense of identity and being pained over another's successful status.

When one connects to others by way of using his element of water, he can have a "good eye" on the other and thereby avoid jealousy and hatred of the other.

Understandably, there are also impaired uses of water when connecting to another, such as the trait of envy (*chemdah*) which comes from the element of water. There is also a way of connecting to another by using holy fire, through friendly competition with another, highlighting their differences between each other with the intention of learning from one another.

As an example of this kind of "fire" connection, the Gemara says that a father and son or Rebbi and talmid can start out as enemies towards each other when they debate in Torah discussions with each other, but by the time they are finished, they become beloved friends with each other. Why? Because they have used their differences to learn from one other.

In spite of this, the ideal way to connect to others is not through fire, but through water, which is: increasing love towards the other, giving to the other, and having a "good eye", a positive view, on the other.

to the dakus of these matters, he won't know his worst middah, and then he won't know what to work on. But even if he does know his worst middah, the middah itself consists of many different factors – he will work on one part when he should be working on a different point of the middah. Not only won't he fix it, but he will damage himself, because he is mixing up different sugyos.

Therefore, the depth of avodah is not possible unless a person is aware of the different parts of the middah. One must know which element the middah is rooted in, which bad middah it is, and which part of the bad middah needs to be fixed.

It's easy for a person to label his worst middah with terms like "I'm lazy", "I get angry", "I'm a glutton", "I chat too much", "I am haughty", etc. but these are all general terms which do not explore the root of the bad middah at hand. They are all true descriptions, but they are each complex, consisting of several factors.

One has to be aware of each part of the bad middah. It's possible that a person is working hard for many years at trying to uproot a bad middah, but he is working on the wrong point. After a person is clear what he has to rectify, comes the step of how to go about rectifying.

I am currently learning Chovos Halevavos Shaar Habechinah, and I am trying to get myself to appreciate the wisdom and kindness in Hashem's world. However, when I go out and look at the world, it's very hard for me to really feel these feelings. How can I use the four elements system to help me appreciate the beauty in nature?

Answer: One of the reasons why it's often hard for a person to appreciate the beauty of Hashem's world is because we are used to looking at the world in a very superficial way. Our perspective on the world usually starts with the fact that we have something we want, and we just look at the world to try to see how we can use it to satisfy our desires. In terms of the יסודות, ארבעה יסודות, this is an outlook which stems from the יסוד האש, which creates a שאיפה for something new, and a feeling of lack in regard to what we have. One of the side effects of this outlook is that - like the nature of fire - it dries out everything it

touches. The sole aspect a person sees in anything which he looks at through the lens of the יסוד האש is whether this thing will satisfy my lack. Anything else is irrelevant to him. Therefore, this outlook causes us to have a very dry picture of the world, and not appreciate its beauty and goodness.

In order to begin to appreciate the beauty of the world, you have to look out at the world objectively, from a calm and satisfied place inside of you. From this perspective, you can look at the world around you in a much deeper way. As the passuk says, "מים עמוקים עצה בלב" - the deep inner thoughts of a person are compared to water, which naturally penetrates to a much deeper place than fire. This way, when you look at the world you will be stirred to figure out and connect to not only what's on the surface, but also to what's behind everything you're seeing: Where did this all come from? What's behind it all? As the passuk says, "שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה" - "Lift your eyes up high and see - Who

created these?" This inner quest is the foundation of the whole Shaar Habechinah.

Additionally, this approach of the יסוד המים will help you be able to appreciate the myriad nuances and details in the world. The nature of the יסוד האש is that it causes one to see things in a very general way. This is similar to how two flames which come near each other always join into one big fire - fire always exists as one entity which can't be broken into smaller parts. The calmer nature of the יסוד המים, however, allows one to focus more on the details of something, similar to how water itself can be separated into an endless amount of small drops. The key to seeing the true beauty of Hashem's world lies specifically in appreciating the infinite details of the world, and how they all come together to create one cohesive, stunning picture of goodness!

ארבעת היסודות בלשון רבותינו

[מייסד שכמו שארבעת היסודות הם אבני היסוד של הבריאה הגשמית, כמו כן בנפש האדם ארבעת היסודות הם אבני הבנין של המידות, הן לטוב והן למוטב.] ואמנם כמו שארבעת היסודות גופנים הם שרשים שמהם נוצרו תרי"ג איברי הגוף, כמו כן נפשות הארבעה יסודות האלו הם יסודות לכל המדות טובות ורעות, אשר באמצעותן יקוימו או יתבטלו התורה והמצוות שהן תרי"ג, מארבע אותיות ההוי"ה כנ"ל. והמקיימן הם נפש השכלית הכלולה מארבעה יסודות רוחנים, אשר משם חוצבו תרי"ג איברי הנפש ההיא... והבן זה מאוד, איך... כמו שבארבעה היסודות הגופנים, הנקראים חומר היסודות, מורכב מטוב מרע, ומשם באים כחות קיום הגוף או תחלואיו... כמו כן בנפשות, הנקרא צורת הארבעה יסודות, הן על דרך זה, טוב ורע, ומהן נמשך בריאות הנפש היסודית שבאדם, שהן מדות הטובות, או תחלואיה, שהן מדות הרעות הנמשכות מארבע קליפות טמאות שבנפש ההיא. וכשיסירם מעליו, יתלבשו ארבע אותיות של ההוי"ה, שהן אור המחיה נפש היסודית, וגם היא והגוף שלה יהיו מרכבה אל קדושתו

יתברך... (שערי קדושה לרבינו חיים ויטאל פרק ב')

בלבבי • קול התורה מירושלים

BILVAVI - FROM YERUSHALAYIM



register for weekly publications via
 bilvavi231@gmail.com
 via fax
 03.548.0529

תובנות מעוררות מדי שבוע

לקבלת העלון השבועי בדוא"ל יש לשלוח בקשה לכתובת: bilvavi231@gmail.com לקבלת העלון השבועי בפקס יש לשלוח בקשה לפקס 03-5480529

2 WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH



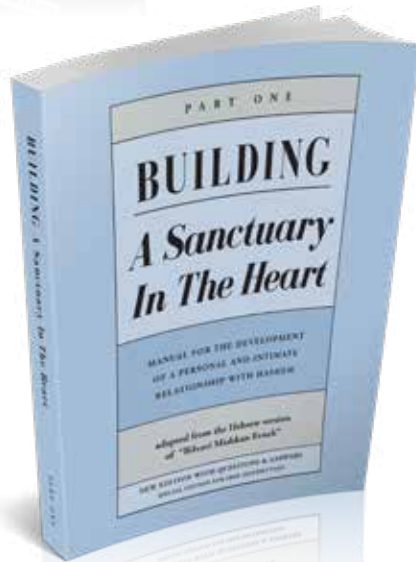
בלבבי • זיכוי הרבים



הדפסה של 1000 - נותרו 4 תקים



הדפסה של 500 - נותרו 20 עותקים



2000 printed- 780 remaining



הדפסה של 4000 - נותרו 80



הדפסה של 500 - נותרו 0 עותקים

Listen to
Bilvavi on
Kol haLashon
Israel 073.295.1245
USA 605.313.6660

Register for the
weekly newsletter
email :
bilvavi231@gmail.com
fax: 03-5480529

© all rights reserved
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

BILVAVI FOUR ELEMENTS
EARTH ♦ WATER ♦ WIND ♦ FIRE