



BILVAVI

# FOUR ELEMENTS

ISSUE 007 ♦ 5784

## BACKGROUND

Last week, Yaakov and Tzvi finished discussing the **יסוד המים**, and they are now ready to move on to the next **יסוד**...

## מקורות ומקבילות שיחת חברים

זכירת סוגיות המידות בלי זכרון מיוחד - דע את מחשבותיך סוף פ"ה. לוקח זמן לתת הגדרה למידות - עלי שור ח"א שע"ג מערכה א' פרק ט'. הבנה אמיתית בדברי חז"ל מגיע רק ע"י עבודה פנימית - עלי שור הקדמה לח"ב באריכות.

הכרת חיצוניות המידות בלבד מולידת תפיסה שהמידות "פורחות באויר" - דע את ביתך פרק ו', דע את הרגשותיך פ"ב. בכדי להכיר את עצמו מן ההכרח להיכנס לעולם הפנימי - הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש פ"ד.

הכניסה לעולם הפנימי הוא ע"י צירוף של השכל והלב - שם פרקים ז' וח'.

הכרה בהירה במידות נובעת מהכרת שורשיהם ולא רק ענפיהם - שם. נגיעות מונעת את האדם מלהכיר את אמיתות עצמו - עלי שור ח"א שם.

לימוד המידות הוא השלב הראשון בתיקונם - הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש סוף פ"ה.

## FRIENDS SCHMOOZE EXTENDED INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR ELEMENTS

**Yaakov:** Tell me if I'm wrong, but I think we should be starting the **יסוד האש** this week...

**Tzvi:** That's right! So tell me, you have any guesses what it might be?

**Yaakov:** Well to be honest, I do remember once hearing that the **מידות** of **אווה** and **כעס** come from the **יסוד האש**, so I can't say that I have no idea at all what it is. But these are obviously negative expressions of the **יסוד האש**, and they clearly do not represent how the **יסוד האש** is meant to be used on a constant basis in our lives...

**Tzvi:** Very good...

**Yaakov:** Then there's also what we talked about in our first conversation, when I brought up the issue of following the **ריקנות** of **מידה** - feeling empty - which you said was connected to the **יסוד האש**...

**Tzvi:** Very good! I'm glad you still remember...

**Yaakov:** Of course I do! I can't say that I remember every detail, but in general, because these conversations touch on identifying exactly about what's going on inside of me, it's not that hard to remember them...

**Tzvi:** You mean that you feel like you can remember these conversations

more easily than other things you learnt?

**Yaakov:** 100%. I personally don't think that I have an especially good memory, and when it comes to other things that I learnt, generally if I don't review, I forget things pretty quickly. But when it comes to these topics, I feel like it's not a point of memorization - these are things that you live with constantly. It's sort of like your name or your birthday - there are certain things that you just don't really forget.

**Tzvi:** Amazing, Yaakov! That means that you're really internalizing these points, and **הלואי** that I should also be internalizing them to the same extent!

**Either way, getting back to our topic of the **יסוד האש**, do you want to try to offer a suggestion of what the overall **כה** of the **יסוד האש** is?**

**Yaakov:** I feel like all these **מידות** of the **יסוד האש** which we discussed are all pointing in the same sort of direction, but I don't really know how to define it yet...

**Tzvi:** No problem! These things take time...

**Yaakov:** As a side note, this whole concept of being able to clearly figure out and define your feelings and **מידות** is really an amazing thing... If someone would have asked me before we started if

*such a thing was possible, I would have said no! I always looked at emotion like something which is much more "פורה באויר" - not something which can be bound to and explained by an exact science...*

**Tzvi:** The truth is that it is virtually impossible to figure out and define a person's emotions from the outside. The whole חכמה of the מידות is an inner חכמה whose יסודות were handed down to us by Chazal, and which we can build upon only through working on ourselves in an inner way.

**Yaakov:** *What do you mean by "an inner חכמה"?*

**Tzvi:** I mean that in order to really understand your מידות, you have to look at them from the inside, from within yourself. You need to start out from a truthful and calm place within yourself, with an honest goal of uncovering your true self and a willingness to work towards this cause, and then with time and סייעתא דשמיא, you can slowly come closer and closer to really understanding yourself.

**Yaakov:** *I don't really get what you're trying to say - what are you coming לאפוקי from?*

**Tzvi:** My point is that learning yourself is very different than learning any other external knowledge. For example, let's say a person wants to become an engineer - he needs to study the material and know it well. Perhaps there are also certain concepts he has to become familiar with, and he may need to develop a "feel" for what works and what doesn't. But overall, his job affects and takes up only his mind and nothing else. He need

not be emotionally invested in his job and the cause which stands behind it, and he can do his job just as well if all he cares about is the paycheck he will be getting at the end of the month.

**Yaakov:** *Okay... and here?*

**Tzvi:** When it comes to understanding your מידות, it's not like that! You can't simply decide that you want to get a degree in

## SUMMARY OF SCHMOOZE

If you internalize what you learn about the *middos*, you can remember these concepts even without having an especially good memory.

Learning about the *middos* uses your heart just as much as your mind. The goal is to know what's behind the *middos*, not just the superficial *middos*. To get there, we first learn about them logically, and then stop to think into myself and feel myself out - where do I find myself in this whole picture?

If not Chazal giving us the keys to this חכמה, we couldn't figure it out on our own, for 2 reasons:

1. Because the *middos* of קנאה, תאווה, and כבוד distance us from our inner world, and we can't pick up on the subtle nuances which motivate our *middos*.

2. Because our נגיעות blocks us from really wanting to know ourselves for real.

By learning Chazal's "map" of the *middos* we are already carrying out the first step of fixing our *middos*, because we are choosing to get to know the straight, inner path which Chazal handed down to us!

"self-awareness" as a means of helping you make money, and then set out to learn your מידות without being truly invested in this cause.

**Yaakov:** *Why not?*

**Tzvi:** Because מידות are an emotional thing, and learning them takes just as much emotional investment as their intellectual investment. It's sort of like making a friendship - you can't make a friendship just because it will help you in life. In order to develop a true relationship, you need to be truly emotionally invested. The same thing is true here - in order to learn your מידות you need to really care. You need to work with your heart just as much as with your mind: You need to constantly take note of what exactly triggers your מידות and feelings, in what way they get affected by what, and you need to try to sense and "feel things out" just as much as you need to try to understand them logically.

**Yaakov:** *Okay, but still - why exactly are you calling this an "inner חכמה"? Maybe it should be an "emotional חכמה"?*

**Tzvi:** The חכמה of מידות is an inner חכמה because it is a חכמה which in order to pick up on, a person has to have access to a deeper place within his emotions. As a משל, there is a certain range of sound waves which anyone can hear, and beyond that range, there are radio waves which only special devices can detect. In a similar way, there are internal forces which control a person that anyone can feel, and there are certain nuances which can only be detected when a person comes more deeply inside of himself.

**Yaakov:** *What does it mean to come "more deeply inside of himself"?*

**Tzvi:** It means that instead of focusing his emotions and מידות

on the money and honor he can get from the outside world, he has to come to place in himself where he cares about and focuses on what's going on inside himself. This is the simple meaning of what the משנה says "הקנאה והתאוה" - "והכבוד מוציאים את האדם מן העולם" - these external מידות take a person out of his own inner world, and he loses track of what he's really doing with himself and his life.

**Yaakov:** *I still don't really understand - why exactly can't you come to understand yourself for the sake of a superficial agenda?*

**Tzvi:** Before I gave the משל of radio waves, but I'll try to give a better משל: When it comes to learning, sometimes you have a very complicated חשבון, or a perhaps a deep סברא, which you can only follow or comprehend if you are fully focused on it. You need to close your eyes, block out everything else, and really concentrate, and then you can get it straight...

**Yaakov:** *Yes, I can relate to that...*

**Tzvi:** So it is similar with the subtleties of our מידות. In order to pick up on the inner workings of our מידות, we need to be in touch with our deeper inner desires, and we need to be able to focus on them calmly. And as long as what we're really interested in is the תאוה, קנאה, and כבוד of the outside world, we're simply out of touch with our true selves, and even our minds will have a very hard time picking up on the subtleties of what's going on inside of us.

**Yaakov:** *I got you. But let's say I do have קנאה, תאוה, and כבוד - now what? I want to work on myself, but now you're saying that I can't even come to understand myself until I've already perfected my מידות!?*

**Tzvi:** Of course! הם ושלום. Of course ה' wants us to start from the bottom and work our way up slowly, and אין הקב"ה בא בטרוניא על בריותיו. What I meant to explain was only why on our own it is so difficult to understand ourselves, and that's why הקב"ה gave us this tremendous חכמה in the תורה, and as explained by Chazal and the חכמי הדורות. Now our job is just to take their words and try to discover what they describe to us within ourselves, and this is a job which even we can do, slowly but surely.

**Yaakov:** *And how exactly does this solve the issue you were describing above?*

**Tzvi:** I'll try to explain: In order to come up with the whole science of the מידות on your own, you would need to be completely in touch with your true self, or in other words, completely ישר. The pull of תאוה, קנאה, and כבוד pull a person astray from the דרך הישר, and he starts seeing things from his angle, which stops him from truly seeing the full picture. And since we are all subject to these מידות, we couldn't ever come up with this whole חכמה on our own - we are simply "out of touch" with this inner ישירות. However, when Chazal came along and laid out the חכמת המידות before us, they in essence laid before us a set of instructions, a "user manual", describing how an אדם הישר looks, in a way which we can understand.

**Yaakov:** *Okay, so how does that help us?*

**Tzvi:** Because now we have before ourselves true בחירה: On the one hand, our מידות are naturally not ישרות, whereas on the other hand, our minds are naturally capable of appreciating ישירות. If we so choose to, our minds

can learn in depth what the דרך הישר is, and by working with our minds and hearts together, we can slowly come back and start feeling this inner ישירות in our hearts as well. But on the other hand, we have the choice of leaving our minds to simply work for our natural מידות, to figure out how to get what they want and to actualize their desires. In this case, our מידות will naturally be pulled after the external world and become bad מידות, and our mind will merely follow after them and try to actualize them, and we will have no hope of ever coming across the דרך הישר and living a true, inner life.\*

[Note: This is true for some people, not for everyone. There are some people who are naturally born with a strong feeling for ישירות, and they naturally have an inner conflict within their מידות themselves between their feeling of ישירות and their bad מידות.]

**Yaakov:** *Wow! So in other words, by us learning here the חכמת המידות of Chazal, we're already doing the first step in תיקון המידות, because we're choosing to learn and understand what the דרך הישר is...*

**Tzvi:** Exactly! And the more we come to feel how the דרך הישר is what we really want, the more we already have done the bulk of the work of תיקון המידות!

**Yaakov:** *Sound amazing! I think that by now the יסוד האש might have to wait until next week, but I think I gained a lot from this conversation in understanding the importance of our learning...*

**Tzvi:** Great! Looking forward...



**Q1: Is this true only with regards to learning the Rav's sefarim [and shiurim]?**

**A:** In order for a person to succeed at understanding anything, he needs to amass a general picture of the information of the subject. **First, one needs to learn the information simply without trying to analyze it**, and after going through all of the information on a superficial level, he should **then try to understand** what he has learned. Chazal say that there must first be "ligmar" (learning) and then "lisbar" (analysis).

For example, right now in the *Kolel* we are learning *Sefer Nefesh HaChaim, Shaar Daled*. It would be a good idea to go through the entire *sefer* during the upcoming *Bein HaZemanim* and just see all of the words, without trying to understand them yet. The point is to first acquire a "tzurasa d'shmaatsa" (body of knowledge), a general understanding of the information. Just read through the *sefer* quickly, from the beginning of the section until the end of the section.

**You can do the same with sefer Mesillas Yesharim. First go through the entire sefer from beginning to end and read through it quickly, so that you can at least get a general picture of it. After that, you can delve more in-depth into the sefer and try to understand each thing you have learned about.**

**Q2: How much should one try to understand material when he's first reading it?**

**A:** The first time you read about something, your understanding towards it cannot go further than a child's understanding. "Tzurasa d'shmaatsa" doesn't mean that you are trying to delve into the words in-depth.

**Q3: How does it work that each person has one particular negative character trait that stems from a dominance in one of the four elements?**

**A:** Each person has one element that is his strongest, an element that is second-to-strongest, and element that is third-to-strongest, and fourth-to-strongest. It is different with each person's soul makeup. The worst character trait of a person is found in his strongest and most dominant element. By some people, their best character trait and their worst character trait is found in one element. With others, their best character trait is located in one element and their worst character trait is located in a different element – that would mean that their souls are more complicating to understand.

**Q4: Does one need to be on a high spiritual level in order to determine what his most dominant element is?**

**A:** One cannot identify what his most dominant element is if he hasn't studied the four elements of the soul. As we have said here, the very first step is to amass the information about the four elements of the soul, and after that one can attempt to identify which element is most dominant in his own soul. There are a few people who have penetrating insight into themselves and they are able to begin at the second stage, but most people are going to have to go through the first stage.

**Q5: Why is it that there are almost no sefarim that mention the four elements of the soul?**

**A:** We must know something very fundamental about *mussar sefarim*. There are all different types of *sefarim* written by our previous Gedolim. *Sefer Orchos Tzaddikim* talks about the *middos*, but there is no order of what to work on first. Each *middah* is explained about in a separate chapter, but there is no order. It is unclear why this *sefer* was written this way, but there is no orderly path of what to work on first when you learn that *sefer*. The Vilna Gaon said that all the *mussar sefarim* are good, but *Mesillas Yesharim* is the best *sefer*, because it is arranged in an orderly fashion. However, we emphasized here in this *shiur* that even *sefer Mesillas Yesharim* can be problematic to learn, because it is a ladder of ten steps based on the Ten Expressions, and we will not be able to navigate through these steps without knowledge about our four elements of the soul.

The truth is that there is no one *sefer* (order) to follow when it comes to *avodah*. We are not either implying that one must work on himself on the order of these *shiurim* which explain to us about the four elements of the soul. We are coming to explain here what we have to work with as we work on ourselves, and it is this area which we seek to clarify and understand. There is no one set *sefer* (order) to follow in *avodah*; it's an entirely different matter to discuss. What we are emphasizing here is that if a person never becomes clear about his own soul, he will never be able to be clear about what the *sefer* of his *avodah* should be.

**Q6: Is it worthy for a person to work on the middos based on the system of the four elements?**

**A:** Not only is it worthy, it is absolutely necessary.

**Q7: Why isn't this spoken about in our sefarim?**

**A:** The *sefarim* speak about the *middos*, but most of the *sefarim* do not discuss our *avodah* in a step-by-step manner, so there is no *sefer* that tells us what the *sefer* (order) of one's *avodah* should be. The Torah was not written in chronological order either.

There is an argument amongst the Sages if the *Mishnayos* have a specific order to them. In most places, the words of our Rabbis that discuss *avodah* are not arranged in a step-by-step manner; thus there is no *sefer* to their words.

For example, open up the Alter of Kelm's *sefer, Chochmah U'Mussar*. Do you see any *sefer* to the words there? It is a collection of all hundreds of his talks and there is no way to know which area to work on first. Some of the talks have *sefer* to them and you can see how one talks leads into the next talk, but most of this *sefer* is not arranged in an orderly and step-by-step manner.

Take a look at Rav Dessler's five-volume set of *Michtav M'Eliyahu*. Is there an order of what to work on first in that *sefer*? There is no order there to follow.

*Chovos HaLevovos* is the one *sefer* that is arranged with some order. He writes in the introduction that he has specifically arranged the chapters according to the specific order that it's in, but this doesn't apply to all of the chapters of the *sefer*; there are some chapters which are meant to be learned consecutively, but a large part of the *sefer* has no specific order to it. Additionally, the ladder of steps presented in *Chovos HaLevovos* is not necessarily the order that everyone must follow in their *avodah*.

What about *sefer Shaarei Teshuvah*? Is there a *sefer* to his words? Are his words arranged in a step-by-step manner? Does one have to work on himself starting with the matters discussed in *Shaar Aleph* (Gate I) and ending with *Shaar Daled* (Gate IV)...?

Even the Talmud Bavli was not arranged in an orderly fashion. The Rambam came and attempted to give order of what to learn to learn first in the Gemara. The *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch* followed suit and also gave order to the *halachos* found in the Gemara. But the Gemara itself has no order to it. Both *Agadta* and *Halacha* parts of Gemara are not arranged in any specific order. The Rambam and others who came after him were the only ones to give any kind of order to the Gemara, but when it comes to our *avodah*, there is no *sefer* that has arranged what the order of our *avodah* should be.

**Q8: Does that mean that there is no sefer which discusses any topic completely and perfectly?**

**A:** There is no *sefer* which we can tell anyone to learn that will provide him with the answers he is looking for. Because nothing is arranged in a completely step-by-step manner, there is no *sefer* that can completely calm you.

Let me ask you a question. Let's say you are trying to learn the *halachos* of *borer* (the laws of mixing on Shabbos). If not

for the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*, would you know where to look in the Gemara in order to learn these halachos? Would you just look at the *Ein Mishpat's* commentary? If we have no Rambam and no *Shulchan Aruch* on it, where will you find these halachos? If a person wants to learn the halachos of *netilas yadayim* or *tefillin*, where in the Gemara is it discussed? The halachos are spread out all over the place. Some areas in the Gemara are more concentrated and you can find all of the halachos there, but other halachos of the Gemara are spread out in ten different places in the Gemara.

Just as we can understand that was no *sefer* given to the Gemara before the Rambam came along and gave *sefer* to it, so can we understand that there is no *sefer* given of our *avodah*. The Rambam only arranged the halachos of the Gemara in an orderly fashion; he didn't do this was the *Agadta* parts, which explain to us about matters of *avodah*. Therefore, we are left without a *sefer* in our *avodah*.

**Q9: How can a person have a seder to his avodah?**

**A:** A person needs to become clear about what the four elements of the soul are, within his own soul. Then he should slowly begin to study the words of Chazal that discuss matters of *avodah*, and gradually he will be able to amass all of the words together and see what the order should be. This is a very difficult task to do, of course. It is the depth of exile.

**Q10: If it is so important to know about the four elements of the soul, why doesn't sefer Mesillas Yescharim talk about it and emphasize it?**

**A:** *Sefer Mesillas Yescharim* is a path that is based upon working our ways upwards, from the bottom up. The author of *Mesillas Yescharim* is not writing a *sefer* that describes anyone's personal *avodah* on this world. Rather, the author of *Mesillas Yescharim* has presented a general path of growth that applies to us in a more general sense. The four elements of the soul are a personal and private matter with each person, because the order of the four elements is arranged differently in each person's soul.

*Mesillas Yescharim* is the *sefer* written for the collective of *Klal Yisrael* and it is our general path of growth, but there is a private map of our growth which is not explained in *sefer Mesillas Yescharim*. There is no *sefer* that can guide a person in his personal makeup of his soul. Thus we have no *sefer* that tells us what the *sefer* in our *avodah* should be.

Why is this so? It is because each person needs to begin at a different point. So there is no *sefer* that can tell each person what he should work on first and what he should work on next. We can give order to the four elements themselves, but there is no *sefer* that will tell us what the *sefer* of

our personal *avodah* should be. It is simply impossible for such a *sefer* to exist.

**Q11: The Mesillas Yescharim states where we all need to begin: "Torah leads to zerizus, etc.?" [so obviously that is where we all need to start from]?**

**A:** Let's ask a simple question. If someone's strongest element is earth, does that mean that learning Torah will lead him to have more *zehirus* (alacrity) and then to have more *zerizus* (zeal), in the same way for a person whose most dominant element is water or wing or fire? Surely the Torah has the power to bring a person to the level of *zehirus* and then *zerizus*, but does that mean each person will be acting the same with regards to this? The fact that Torah brings a person to *zehirus* is not going to have the same exact effect on all people equally, because since the soul makeup is different with each person, the *sefer* of each person's *avodah* is not the same.

Surely the stage of learning Torah must come first in the *avodah* of all people, but *how* a person succeeds in this stage, is different with each person, depending on which element is most dominant in his soul.

**Q12: The Rav has said that a person might be making a mistake if he's working on a certain negative trait he wants to fix, when he lacks knowledge about the elements of his soul. But didn't the yeshivos always have a Mashgiach who would give mussar Vaadim (discourses on self-improvement), which focused on one middah at a time?**

**A:** You are asking a very good question. Certainly it would be the best thing if each boy in yeshivah and each man in the *Kolel* had a private *vaad* with his *Mashgiach*. Now, if there are 200 boys in a yeshivah, the *Mashgiach* would be able to give a private discourse to most of the boys of the yeshivah at least twice a year. But a day or two of the year wouldn't be nearly enough for a person to really work on himself. The Chazon Ish that it used to be that there was one *Mashgiach* for 100 boys in the yeshivah, and today there is one *Mashgiach* for 1000 boys in the yeshivah, and that there should really be 100 *Mashgichim* to oversee each boy personally! If there were 100 *Mashgichim* available in each yeshivah for each of the boys, then he would be able to get a *vaad* with a *Mashgiach* once a day for every day of the year. But Hashem made the world in a way that this does not happen.

**Q13: So is the Rav saying that it's pointless to give mussar vaadim?**

**A:** This is the reality of things. It doesn't result in that much improvement. The question is, however: is giving a private *mussar vaad* to each person better than nothing? Or perhaps it would be better to give one *vaad* to a bunch of people and

they will work on themselves together?

This issue was brought before the *Gedolim*. In Kelm they would join a *vaad* together and work on themselves together, and not one-one-one with a teacher. However, a person must consider the following. If he doesn't know his own soul, he will not know how to imply all that he learns about. If he joins a *mussar vaad*, he will be a like a sheep following the herd.

Surely we need to work on ourselves together and strengthen each other in self-improvement, but a person needs to first know his own soul, what he can work on and what he can't work on. Ten boys in yeshivah and ten *Kolel* men cannot all work to improve on the same character trait all on an equal level. Each person reacts differently to the subject material being taught. Each person has his own background and personality – you can't expect all the people in a *mussar vaad* to all work on the same trait equally. It's not like a *sukkah* where a bunch of people can sit underneath one *sukkah* and fulfill the *mitzvah*. Each soul is very different and built very differently.

If you have a suggestion of how *mussar vaadim* can be made more practical to accommodate each person's particular personality, to the contrary; go ahead with it.

**Q14: If a person has a certain negative character trait that he has a hard time fixing, does that mean that this situation is being sent to him from Heaven as his tikkun (rectification) on this world?**

**A:** Not only is his difficulty with his character being "sent to him from Heaven", but he was born that way to begin with, to complete his life's mission.

**Q15: After a person gets to understand his soul, will he require help in improving himself?**

**A:** Most people cannot deal with their problems by themselves and they need someone else to help them. There are a few rare individuals who are both with sharp self-awareness and they can work on themselves without confiding in another person. There are also some people who were born with a natural power to act *lishmah* (for the sake of Hashem) and they are capable of great *mesirus nefesh* (altruism), which enables them to penetrate deeply into their souls, without the assistance of others. But most people are not capable of acting *lishmah* and with *mesirus nefesh* and they do not have that much self-awareness; therefore, most people require help from others in order to understand themselves.

**Q16: Is there any sefer one can learn which teaches him about how to use his soul's abilities?**

**A:** Part of this study can be attained through the *sefarim* that explain the [four]

# FIXING YOUR MIDDOS

I am a bachur in Yeshiva Gedolah, and I was once by a shiur where the speaker spoke out very strongly against certain methods of behavior which he felt were wrong על פי תורה. The topic didn't have anything to do with me, but the way the speaker allowed himself to poke fun at these behaviors and to portray them in such a belittling way irked me. I thought to myself: "Why can't he just stress the positive, rather than working on putting down the negative?"

Is there any validity to these feelings? How can I look at this topic from the perspective of the four elements?

Answer: What is relevant to you is not so much whether the speaker was right or wrong for what he personally said, but rather mainly to gain the proper perspective on this topic for yourself. So we'll frame the question as follows: When is it proper for a person to focus on bringing out the negative side of the bad, and when is it proper to just try to avoid the topic of the bad altogether, and focus on bringing out the good side of the good?

This is really a big topic which is hard to cover in a short response, but here are a few rules of thumb:

A. In general, it is true that a person must be more focused overall on עשה טוב rather than סור מרע. If a person is

busy all day just making fun of the רע, this means that bottom line, he's working with the רע all day. It's like working all day in the garbage dump - the bottom line is that any contact with רע, even just making fun of it, brings a person down, and doing this all day is a very unhealthy situation. This is especially true if a person gets his main חיות from putting down the רע instead of from building up the טוב. A person must make himself as pure of an environment as possible, where he can feel somewhat safe from the רע, and then focus mainly on עשה טוב.

B. At the same time, in order to be safe from the רע, there definitely is a place for ליצנותא דע"ז. There is a common attitude among people to push for only using עשה טוב without any focus on putting down the רע at all, and this is a big mistake. To understand why, imagine two countries fighting a war, where one of the countries takes the offense, while the other country, as a matter of policy, focuses only on defensive measures, but will never make any offensive move. Such a system simply doesn't work! No defense is foolproof, and in order to truly defend yourself, you need to be willing to take an offensive stand against someone who is threatening you. The same is true with the מלחמת היצר - the יצה"ר is fighting a constant battle against us,

and if we're unwilling to fight back, there is no way to be saved from his grip. [There is also another concept behind ליצנותא דע"ז, which is that a person is supposed to live in a עולם ברור - a world of clarity, where he has a clear perception of what's real and what's fake, what's true and what's false, and to make sure that these lines don't get blurred by outside influences.]

C. The שורש of the above points is from the difference between the יסוד המים and the יסוד האש. When it comes to עשה טוב, the main יסוד which we are to use is the יסוד המים, which helps us feel how good the טוב is. This helps us be משתוקק for the טוב and appreciate it, but it doesn't necessarily bring out how crucial and absolutely necessary it is. On the other hand, when it comes to סור מרע, the main יסוד which we must use is the יסוד האש. The יסוד האש is what tells us that there is no choice! When a person is faced by a fire, he doesn't tell himself how special his life is and how nice it would be to live another day... he simply has no two sides! This is the only way to truly fight the יצה"ר - by strengthening ourselves to feel that there are no two sides here, through the יסוד האש. And one of the ways of bringing this out is through the koach of ליצנותא דעבודה זרה, which belittles the side of the רע not to be a side at all.



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### THE SYMPTOMS

Wind enables all movement. Wind-of-earth cannot produce strong movement, since in the earth slows down the movement of the wind and restricts the wind from moving as it should. Wind-of-earth-of-fire gives an advantage to wind-of-earth because of the jumpy nature of the fire which allows the wind to get moving more, but it is ultimately a slowed movement since it is wind-of-earth, very much limiting the jumpy nature of the fire.

A more subtle point about wind-of-earth-of-fire is that the wind here will allow for a constant movement between earth and fire, since the wind is constantly moving back and forth between the earth and fire here.

As mentioned, with any hatred that stems from earth-of-fire, a person is pained mainly over the fact that his friend has higher status and therefore the person feels lower than the other, causing the person to become focused on his earth. Thus, all hatred for another is essentially a state of moving back and forth between one's own situation – his "earth" – with focusing on the elevated status of another, essentially focusing on another's "fire" [another's higher status which I wish I could ascend to]. And therefore, wind-of-earth-of-fire is the very root concept of hatred, because the movement of the wind is constantly awakening the person to keep focusing on recognizing and feeling the lowliness of his own situation, causing him to become hyper-focused on his inferior state as a result of dwelling on the other's higher status: "He is going higher and succeeding, while I'm staying down below..." He is more focused on the lowliness of his own situation than on the success of his friend. What's causing him pain is not primarily the fact that his friend is of higher status than he, but primarily because he is focused on how he is lower than the other.

### THE REMEDY

The root of the remedy here lays in using the root power of the wind's ability to move.

Wind can move in any of the six dimensions (*east, west, north, south, up, down*), and we wave the Lulav in all six dimensions in order to ward off the "evil dew" and "evil winds" from all those directions. However, there is a subtle difference between the movements of the four directions (*north, south, east, west*) with the movements of up or down. Moving in any of the four directions is an intrinsic aspect of the wind's movement, since the wind naturally moves on its own in any of these four directions, without making use of any other element. But when the wind moves up or down, it has to "clothe" itself in another element. The wind can only move upwards by way of fire, where the wind takes on the form of fire, and it can only move downwards by way of water (*the Gra teaches specifically about the element water that "water leaves a high place to descend to a low place"*), and here the wind will take on the form of water.

Therefore, when a person's movement is impaired, such as in the case of hatred stemming from wind-of-earth-of-fire where is moving back & forth between above (*fire - focusing on his friend's elevated status*) and below (*earth - focusing on his own lowly or unsuccessful status*), the root of the remedy is to leave go of the wind's ability to move up or down (*since this is not the primary ability of the wind's movement but an ability that can only work with either fire or water*) and to instead access the root power of wind's movement, which is the ability to move in any of the four directions.

In practical terms, this means that instead of being trying to move "vertically" [*trying to be higher so that he won't be lower*], one focuses on expanding "horizontally" [*proper self-expansion, by focusing on how he can expand his own abilities*].

## ארבעת היסודות בלשון רבותינו

[ע"פ קונטרס "מקורות לארבעת היסודות" של מו"ר שליט"א]  
כל עבודת השם תלוי בתיקון המידות, שהם כמו לבוש למצוות וכללי התורה. וכל החטאים מושרשים במידות, והמידות מושרשין בארבעה יסודות. (אבן שלמה להגר"א פרק א' אות א')  
החטאים מושרשים במידות והמידות מושרשין בד' יסודות, כמ"ש שהתאווה הוא ביסוד המים, והדיבור ברוח, והכעס באש, והעצלות בעפר. (ליקוטי הגר"א שם מתיקו"ז).  
וכן הן ד' מידות ראשיות שכוללין התאוני וכעסני ושיחה ועצבות, ואלו הן ד' אבות נזיקין שכל אחד מאלו כולל הרבה מאד, שאלו הן ד' מדרגות, הלבנה היא יסוד המים, והאדומה מהאש, ומהן התאוני [מהמים] והכעסני [מהאש], ומהירוקה [רוח] השיחה, ומהשחורה [עפר] העצבות. (ליקוטי הגר"א שם מדבריו בביאורי אגדות ריש ב"ק).

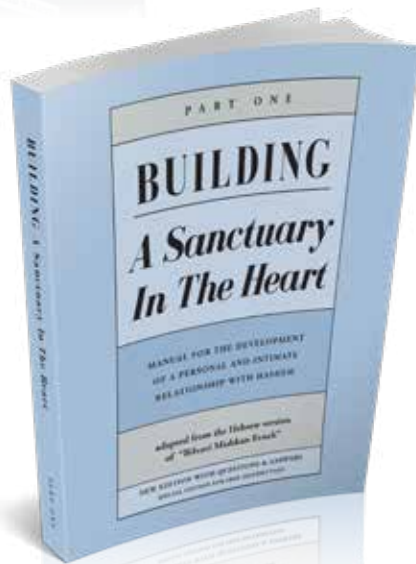
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