


BILVAVI

FOUR ELEMENTS

ISSUE 011 ♦ 5784 ♦ THE SOLUTION TO ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS

FRIENDS SCHMOOZE EXTENDED INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR ELEMENTS

BACKGROUND

Last week, Yaakov and Tzvi discussed the different ways people react when faced by a difficult situation. In order to do what they really want to do they'll have to invest hard work. They explained that while the **יסודות** of **עפר** and **מים** create a tendency for a person to try to avoid hard work, the nature of the **יסוד האש** to overcome opposition can motivate a person to work hard. However, the same **יסוד האש** can also cause a person to get upset about his situation and try to fight it and work against it, so they're trying to figure out how to avoid this issue...

Tzvi: Yaakov, we left off last week hanging... You remember where we were?

Yaakov: Definitely! We were trying to figure out how to use the **יסוד האש** to help us not be lazy or laid-back in life. This should help us motivate ourselves to pursue our goals even when it will take hard work to succeed. At the same time

*this will, ensure that this **אש** will not cause us to get fed up with the very situation which is making us work hard itself. And I'm anxiously awaiting the answer...*

Tzvi: So let's get going! To help make the picture clearer, I want to reference back to the discussion we had a while back about the **יסוד המים**, when we differentiated between the two main **מידות** which the **יסוד המים** causes - **תאוה** and **אהבה**. There is a big parallel between our discussion then, about the **יסוד המים**, and our current discussion about the **יסוד האש**.

Yaakov: You mean because here too, we have two usages of the **יסוד האש**, one which is good and one which is bad?

Tzvi: Yes, but more than that. There is a specific parallel between the difference between **תאוה** and **אהבה**, and the difference we are discussing now, between a person getting upset about his situation or working hard to overcome his challenges.

Yaakov: This sounds a little bit

mysterious... I think you'll have to fill me in here...

Tzvi: Let's take it slowly. We already laid down the main **יסוד** last week, and we'll try to build from there. You remember how we discussed last week that there are two types of **פחד**?

Yaakov: Sure - there's the fear of the unknown, and there's the more concrete fear of a person messing up and not doing something which he knows that he could do and he wants to do.

Tzvi: Very good. That's what we said last week, and now I just want to take this one step further: If we would want to define the difference between these two fears from the perspective of the **ארבעה יסודות**, the difference is whether the **יסוד האש** is working on its own, or whether it is coming in after the **יסוד הרוח**. In the case of fear of the unknown, the **יסוד האש** is working on its own, based on nothing. However, when a person's fear is that he's not doing his best, this is a case

of the **יסוד האש** coming in after the **יסוד הרוח**.

Yaakov: *What does it mean that the **יסוד האש** is coming after the **יסוד הרוח**?*

Tzvi: It means that the starting point of why the person wants to do what he is doing is not from the fear of the **יסוד האש**, but rather a simple desire to do his job in life, from the **יסוד הרוח**. This is when a person is not scared of the "unknown". He knows that **א** runs the world, and he knows that all he has to know and worry about is that he should do the job Hashem assigned him. Everything else is under control - under Hashem's control. In terms of the **יסודות**, **ארבעה**, this means that when it comes to his life, this person's first step is **רוח** - setting out to do his job, simply because that's the role Hashem allotted to him. Once he knows that this role is his, then as a second step, he can now have a fear that perhaps he'll get distracted and not do his job, and then he'll have to take the blame.

Yaakov: *Very interesting... You're saying that he's only afraid of messing up because he already feels that this is his responsibility, through the **רוח**?*

Tzvi: Yes, because such a person doesn't have a fear of the unknown! What's not his responsibility, he doesn't worry about - that's Hashem's business! His only worry is that he should

do his job right, or, in other words, that he carry out his **רוח** to its fullest.

Yaakov: *And this fear is considered a positive fear?*

Tzvi: Yes. The reason for this is because each person's job in life is the specific portion of Hashem's overall plan which Hashem assigned him, and this is his connection to Hashem. Therefore, a person is supposed to be afraid of losing out on this, and this fear is supposed to motivate him to make sure that he does his role properly. Of course, even this fear needs to be properly balanced.

מקורות ומקבילות שיחת חברים

דברי הרמב"ם שבזרחים מה' לה' פירוש המשניות ר"ה פ"ד מ"ז. שהאדם הבוטח אינו מפחד למרות שאולי זה יהיה כואב ספר עלי שור ח"א שע"ד סוף מאמר ראשון. פתרון כללי לכל התנגדות בחיים המצב מה', וההתנגדות רק מהיצה"ר ספר עלי שור ח"א שער ג' סוף מערכה א', ספר תיקון כח הכעס פרק כ' "צורת החיים האמיתית".

Hashem only expects a person to do his best, on his level, and a person needs to trust in Hashem that Hashem will help him do his job, and only demand of himself what Hashem really is expecting of him. But when this fear is well-balanced, then as we said last week, the nature of this fear is that it just causes a person to strengthen himself, because the

outcome is in his own hands! His fear of what may happen if he loses track of his **רוח**, his own inner desire, just causes him to be more careful about it, and to make sure not to take his mind off of what his true goal and desire really are.

Yaakov: *This reminds me of the famous words of the Rambam that because we're afraid of Hashem, we run back towards Him - because there's no one else who can help us. That's exactly what you're saying - when you're afraid of yourself losing track of your goal, you keep coming back and reminding yourself of it.*

Tzvi: Very nice comparison. But realize - this is all because we are discussing a positive fear, a fear which is built upon a sense of **רוח**. A negative fear, on the other hand, is not a fear that I may mess up, but is rather an essential fear that such and such may happen. It is a fear due to a lack of control over the outcome itself, unrelated to whether it's my fault or not. These are the two types of fears we discussed before - there is a fear that I might not do what I was supposed to, based on the **יסוד הרוח**. In this case I need merely to clarify what I'm supposed to be doing. And then there's a fear that something negative may happen, which is a fear from the **יסוד האש** in and of itself, unrelated to what I did or didn't do.

Yaakov: *But why do you call this second type of fear the "fear of*

the unknown"? This would seem to apply to almost all situations of fear - almost always a person is afraid of an unwanted outcome! Let's say there's a war, and he's afraid of a missile falling near him - he's certainly afraid of the outcome, not his action!

Tzvi: That's not necessarily true at all. This is a realization that anybody who is forced to live constantly in a risky situation is that a person can only do his best. Once he feels that he has made the proper decision, he stops worrying. And ultimately, this is the truth - not just because there's no other choice, but because this is the meaning of 'בטחון בה'. A person's job in life is only to do his best, but once he did his best, the outcome is up to Hashem. And since we know that everything Hashem does is for the best, what room is there to be afraid that something bad might happen?

***Yaakov:** Everything Hashem does is for the best, but sometimes it hurts... is that not a reason to be afraid?*

Tzvi: No, it's not. If a person would know 100% that what's happening to him is from Hashem and it's for the best, then he wouldn't be afraid, even if it hurts. This is a fact - very often people willingly undergo pain, but if they know that it is something they can handle, and they decided that it is for their good, then they are not afraid of it, even though it still hurts. It hurts, but it's not frightening.

A person is not afraid of pain in

and of itself. What makes him afraid is the fact that he doesn't want to have pain, but he has no control over the situation. This is why this is called a "fear of the unknown" - it is a fear of not being in control. This is how every negative fear works: that there's an outcome that a person doesn't want to happen... which may happen anyways. The more a person's tranquility comes from feeling like he's in control, the more he gets disturbed by such situations, while the more a person's tranquility comes from entrusting himself into Hashem's hands, the less he gets disturbed by such situations.

***Yaakov:** Very interesting. So getting back to where we were. You're explaining the difference between the two types of fear which we learnt about last week. If I understood you correctly, the fear of the unknown comes from an opposition towards not being in control of the situation, which stems from the **איסור האש** itself. This is the opposite of 'בטחון בה', which dictates that every situation is in Hashem's control. Whatever outcome Hashem makes happen is for the best, and you can't fight or control Hashem's plan. On the other hand, a fear of not doing your job properly comes from the understanding that each person has a certain path he has to traverse, corresponding to the specific part of Hashem's plan which is his job to carry out. This is the route, which his **איסור הרוח** has to follow and lead him. After I know what my job is, then there is room for my **איסור האש** to be activated and oppose anything*

*which may distract me from my job - which are all included in my "יצר הרע". This **אש** doesn't contradict 'בטחון בה', because when it comes to my own job in life, I can't blame things on Hashem.*

Tzvi: Exactly - well said! So now, getting back to your question from last week: When a person is in a difficult situation, and he can either use the **איסור האש** to get upset about the situation itself, or he can accept the situation, and then use the **איסור האש** to force himself to work hard to do what he has to do. What's the difference between the two options?

***Yaakov:** Yes...*

Tzvi: Exactly what we now spoke about! A person's situation is included in his job or not? Who put a person in his situation?

***Yaakov:** Hashem...*

Tzvi: Exactly! So when a person gets upset about his situation itself, this is a wrong usage of the **איסור האש**, from the middah of **לכעס**! When it comes to your situation itself, you need to accept it, to suffer, and to believe that this is what Hashem wants, and it's for the best. Once you've accepted the situation, all you need to do is figure out what Hashem wants from you within your situation.

For example, let's say that one day your boss suddenly lets you know that you're getting laid off. Step one is to realize that Hashem set up this situation, not the boss, so there's no room to get upset about it or to blame it on one cause or

FRIENDS SCHMOOZE THE SOLUTION TO ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS

another. You need to accept that being in this specific situation is a part of the general course in life that Hashem planned for you, and you need to take it in stride. Once you have accepted the situation, step two is to work within the situation and try to figure out how Hashem wants you to handle it. Here is where the positive usage of the **יסוד** **האש** can come in to help you out: Understandably, life is much

more difficult without having a steady job. However, once you realize that what Hashem wants from you now is precisely not to have a steady job, then your **יסוד** **האש** can motivate you not to mess up in fulfilling this challenge! You just need to realize that this is exactly what your role in life is now. This is the course - the **רוח** - in which Hashem is directing you, and if so, then you certainly have the potential to face it. If so, now

is where your **יסוד** **האש** has to kick in, to oppose anything which can stand in your way and make you fail in this course.

Yaakov: This sounds like a full solution to all of life's problems! Well, let's stop for now to let me think this all over, and we'll continue next week!

SUMMARY OF SCHMOOZE

POSITIVE FEAR

The **יסוד** **הרוח** directs my life in a certain direction and then the **יסוד** **האש** creates a fear not to veer from this direction of doing my **תפקיד** through making a wrong decision. I am only afraid when it comes to my own actions and decision, but not about their results, because they are not in my hands. Anything past "doing my best" is in Hashem's hands, and is none of my business. I don't worry about it at all.

NEGATIVE FEAR

The **יסוד** **האש** works on its own, and makes me afraid that something I don't want to happen may happen, without any connection to whether I caused it or not. This fear comes from me not having control over the outcome - because the results are out of my hands. This usage of the **סוד** **האש** is really a form of the middah of **סוד** -either getting upset about the situation itself or getting upset at people who "caused it"...

GENERAL SOLUTION TO ALL OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS!

To agree to accept the situation Hashem put me in, with the understanding that this is a part of the course which Hashem planned out for me - my purpose in life. Then, once I have this sense of purpose of the **יסוד** **הרוח**,

I need to activate the **יסוד** **האש** to give me the confidence to keep going and overcome any and every difficulty that may crop up on my way towards achieving my goal!

FUNDAMENTALS OF MIDDOS IMPROVEMENT

THE BASIS: WORKING WITH OUR ELEMENTS

Without a clear picture of the four elements of the soul, a person is missing the inner wisdom which Hashem used to create the world with meaning that he will be missing the main wisdom. The system of the four elements is the wisdom from Hashem, which was given to our prophets. All of the other systems of *avodah* that are brought in our *sefarim hakedoshim*, while certainly being valid [for they are brought in our *sefarim* of our *Gedolim* of the past], are not based on the system of the four elements, therefore, those systems are not working with the roots.

To illustrate what we mean, there is one system of *avodah* brought which is based on 5 parts of man; another system says that man is comprised of 9 parts; and another system says we are comprised of 11 parts. There are many approaches that describe our *avodah* which differ from each other, and we cannot say they are incorrect, but what we can say is that none of those systems are a root system.

To further illustrate, there are many languages in the world, and our Sages even validated these languages (as we learn in *Tractate Nedarim*). But the root of all languages is *Lashon HaKodesh* (the holy tongue). The root language, *Lashon HaKodesh*, doesn't invalidate the other languages; but although this is true, the other languages are still not a 'root' language. The only root language is *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Along the same lines, we can understand that since the system of the four elements is the root wisdom Hashem used to create man, it is the main structure of man. Thus, the system of the four elements form the backbone of a person's *avodah*.

BALANCE IN OUR AVODAH

In previous generations, there were *Gedolim* who based their *avodah* mainly on *emunah* (faith in G-d). Others mainly based their *avodah* on *temimus* (earnestness). However, any sensible person understands that we cannot serve Hashem today entirely through our *emunah*, or through *temimus* alone, or through *tefillah* alone, etc. There are people today who attempt this, and we will not mention their names, but anybody who is sensible understands that those people are misguided.

This is because it is impossible to truly serve Hashem when we work with just one point of our soul. If someone were to only use his *emunah* and he doesn't work with the rest of his soul's abilities, his *emunah* will become extreme, and he cannot succeed.

Of course, we can say that each *beis midrash* and each private soul in *Klal Yisrael* can have a particular fundamental point that it excels in. But that doesn't require everyone else to mainly work with one quality.

For example, you can have a place in which *tefillah* is their strongest area; let's say it's a shul in which 200 people *daven* beautifully. Can we say that each person is *davening* in the same exact manner? It is not possible, because each soul is built differently. Even if they are all striving to *daven* as best as they can, they cannot all *daven* on the same exact level.

There are people today who feel that the *avodah* of the final generation is *tefillah*, so *tefillah* must be everything. (There is some basis for this in the words of our Sages, but it is not definite, because not all of our Sages had this view.)

Even if this is the case, does that mean that everyone *davens* in the same exact way?

Other views maintain that our main *avodah* now is learning Torah. Does that mean that everyone must learn Torah in the same exact manner and with the same methods of thinking? Others are of the opinion that our main *avodah* now is *chessed*. Does that mean we all need to do *chessed* in any one way? There are other examples as well that we can use, but the point is, there is no one way to work on something.

This is because each person's soul is comprised of the four elements, and in each person the makeup is different, so it is not possible for everyone to act in the same exact manner.

The system of the four elements is therefore not just another concept you hear about when it comes to *avodah*. It is the fundamental system of all wisdom. It is the backbone of all wisdom that Hashem used to create the world with, and it was used to form the makeup of man. Thus, it is the system which each person's *avodah* is based on. All the words which our Sages said are really meant to become aligned with the system of the four elements and to work together with it.

This answers another question you may be asking: Why are we choosing this particular path of working with the four elements, when there are so many other ways to work on ourselves? Why must all our inner work be based on working with the four elements of the soul? According to what we explained here, this question now falls away.

Again, the system of the four elements is not my own invention. It is the system which is first attributed to Avraham Avinu from which everything is based.

FIXING YOUR MIDDOS

Due to my life's circumstances, I have to spend quite a bit of time each day driving. However, I found driving difficult for me from the start, and although I've gotten more used to it by now, it still makes me nervous and uncomfortable. How can I deal with this issue using the Four Elements perspective?

Answer: To help you better understand the root of your difficulty with driving, let's try to analyze the various ways people approach driving from the perspective of the ארבעה יסודות.

If we pay attention, we can discern that there are actually four different attitudes which people have towards driving, based on the ארבעה יסודות. We can illustrate this by picturing four distinct types of drivers on the road:

1. There are drivers who drive slowly and cautiously. Sometimes these drivers drive much slower than everyone else, but even if not, they tend to stay towards the right, not cut ahead of anyone, be mindful of the speed limit, always leave plenty of space between them and the car ahead of them, etc. This symbolizes the יסוד העפר, which is the slowest moving and most stable and "safe" of all the יסודות.

2. There are drivers who "go with the flow". These drivers don't pay much attention to the speed limit, but they also don't specifically try

to speed - they measure their speed relative to the other cars on the road, and cruise along with everyone else. This attitude comes from the יסוד המים, such as when water flows along in a river, that all the water flows along together.

3. There are some drivers who simply enjoy the very movement of driving. Sometimes they may drive fast and sometimes they may drive slowly, but as long as they're moving, they're calm. You can see, for example, that when there's traffic, there are some drivers who will try never to stop. They will rather keep going along very slowly, instead of continuously stopping and going, because they enjoy the movement of the driving, and they find it frustrating not to be moving. This comes from the יסוד הרוח, whose nature is to constantly move.

4. There are drivers whose primary focus in driving is to cut ahead of everyone else. *[Sometimes these are reckless drivers, who cut ahead of people by weaving from lane to lane at dangerously high speeds].* These drivers mark their progress not by how close they are getting to their destination, but by how many cars they left behind them along the way. Alternatively, they may mark themselves by how much faster they arrived than the estimated arrival time their GPS gave them at the beginning of the trip. This attitude comes from the יסוד האש, whose nature is to

"conquer" everything around it. *[Sometimes these drivers find driving very draining, because their driving is very intense, but there are others who find such intense driving enjoyable...].*

Getting back to your case of finding it difficult to drive, the first thing you need to analyze is whether the difficulty is coming from driving itself, or whether it is being caused by an outside cause (for example, if you or someone you know was once in an accident, etc.). If it is an inherent difficulty in driving itself, it is likely coming from the יסוד העפר. The nature of the יסוד העפר is to want to feel stable and secure, and the nature of driving on the road, where everything around you is moving quickly and you have to keep up with them, can make such a person feel "nervous" and "uncomfortable".

Something which may help you is to focus on the stability and structure which exist within the movement of driving. Instead of focusing on the fact that everything is moving, you can focus on how as a whole everyone is moving more or less together, at a given pace. Focusing on this sense of structure within the movement itself can help the יסוד העפר within you continue to feel calm even while driving.

Hatzlacha Rabba!

בלבביפדיה עבודת ה' רה' הרב בלוי 33 ירושלים

בלבביפדיה מחשבה רה' קדמן 4 חולון 20:30



THE SYMPTOMS

Wind is the root of movement. Water is the root of love, and fire is the root of hatred. Sometimes a person will both hate and love the same person! His wind moves back and forth between his fire/hatred and his water/love. This is hatred stemming from **wind-of-water-of-fire** [which causes one to feel a "love-hate relationship"].

A common example of this is the parent-child relationship. Parents have a natural inborn love for their children, but many times the children can disturb and anger their parents very much, sometimes arousing a very strong and intense anger in the parent, which in turn arouses a feeling of hatred for one's own child. Yet, when a parent experiences hatred for their child, this isn't able to uproot the natural love that Hashem has ingrained in the parent for his or her child. This is an example of moving back and forth between love and hatred for the same person – sometimes the parent's love for their child is aroused, and at other times, a parent experiences hatred for their child.

Another example [of 'love-hate relationships'] is commonly experienced when people gain extended family members. Also, it is common that even those who are very good friends with each other, and business partners, can have a great love for each other, but at times they will get into disagreements or even minor arguments about trivial matters, and sometimes the arguments become heated and difficult, yet their deep, old friendship doesn't get uprooted. They move back and forth between love and hatred. Even when they experience

hated for each other in their relationship, their relationship doesn't get severed, and instead, they just have a complicated relationship with each other that's mixed with both love/like and hated/dislike for each other.

THE REMEDY

It is written "Love covers over all sins" (Mishlei 10:12). If one does feel a recognizable love for another, and he also experiences dislike for the other, instead of trying to uproot the hatred directly, he should focus on increasing the love so that it overpowers the hatred.

Practically speaking, one can increase the love by

(1) Giving gifts to the one whom he dislikes. It is written "If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread" (Mishlei 25, 22). The advice therefore is to **give something to him, out of love** and with the **awareness** that one is giving something to the other out of love. This in turn strengthens the love.

(2) **Give to the other with the awareness that you want to increase the love, so that it will overpower your dislike for him.** This will gradually increase the love and weaken the hatred. In addition, the very act of giving to other will weaken the hatred, because the giving contradicts the hatred, and vice versa. And this is especially the case when one is giving to the other out of a love, and because he wants to increase the love and weaken the hatred for the other.

יום שני יז' חשוון תשפ"ה
רה' הרב בלוי 33 ירושלים

20:30

צורת אדם
בנושא זקן



