



BILVAVI

FOUR ELEMENTS

SUMMARIES 5784 ♦ ISSUE 015

SUMMARY 001

- All of our middos & desires are all made up of the same ארבעה יסודות
- Every person has a unique personality, because every person is made up of a unique blend and combination of the ארבעה יסודות
- Our job is just to channel each of these ארבעה יסודות in the right direction.
- Learning the ארבעה יסודות will help me connect my daily life to my dream of coming close to Hashem.
- Listening to the news comes from the יסוד האש, and takes the place of my drive to come close to Hashem!

SUMMARY 002

- יסוד הרוח is the most fundamental יסוד and not עפר like I thought.
- The natural state of a person is to be moving, not to stay still like I thought.
- Proofs: You can't sit in place for too long. You feel a need to move just for the sake of moving, and not to accomplish anything. Also babies enjoy being rocked for no purpose.
- בחירה הפשית vs. inborn desires: What came out – our בחירה is how to direct these desires, but you

can't create new desires or get rid of existing desires - all you can do is purify them.

SUMMARY 003

• The *yesod* הרוח is the force behind all actions, even those which come from one of the other *yesodos*.

Mashal: The engine of a car makes it move, while the gears channel the movement in the right direction.

Nimshal: the *yesod* of הרוח supplies the basic force of movement, and the *yesod* of האש or *yesod* of המים direct this movement towards a specific direction.

• What this means practically: Sometimes person may do things simply because he needs to move around and not necessarily because he wanted to do exactly what he did.

For example - overeating may stem from boredom and not from a desire for pleasure. And the solution corresponds to the root of the problem - finding something positive to do.

• Breakup of the four *yesodos* into pairs of opposites: movement יסוד הרוח vs. stability; יסוד העפר vs. יסוד האש which we will hopefully learn soon! P.S. - Don't

forget: all beginnings are difficult!

SUMMARY 004

- 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.

SUMMARY 005

- 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 - חסד - and by receiving - הכרת - 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 אחדות, which comes along with pleasurable feelings of אהבה. Such אהבה is called "אהבה שאינה תלויה" "בדבר".

SUMMARY 006

אהבה is the main good expression of the יסוד המים

אהבה has three main parts:

1) אהבת ישראל - which itself has three main parts:

- אהבת עצמו - loving yourself:
- loving your family & close friends:
- loving all of Klal Yisroel

The way to work on אהבה is from inside outwards: First work on strengthening your עצמו self-esteem - through becoming aware of, activating, & structuring your life around your natural strengths. Then widen the circle to your family, your friends, and all of Klal Yisroel.

2) אהבת התורה - when I learn my portion of the תורה and I connect to it, I can feel how the תורה is expressing my inner desire to come close to Hashem.

3) אהבת ה' - when I feel my desire to come close to Hashem, what I am really feeling is Hashem's desire that I come close to Him, and this desire of Hashem is itself what draws me close to Him.

SUMMARY 007

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:

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

SUMMARY 008

The יסוד האש - the power to disconnect from your surroundings and to oppose them.

- In a negative/dangerous way - fighting with your surroundings and destroying them
- "מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה" - only if the objective is the לשמה and the לא לשמה is just there to motivate you and help you get there.

The middah of anger of the יסוד האש - must only be used לשם שמים. If it's not לשם שמים, you need to only put on a "show" of anger, without getting emotionally involved.

- In a positive/controlled way - the ability to work hard - overcoming opposition.

SUMMARY 009

GA'AVAH - a feeling of self-worth which stems from comparing yourself to others and stressing your strengths over theirs.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM - feeling lowly because you compare yourself to others and stress your weaknesses over theirs or can come from יסוד העפר, which we'll soon get too...

ANAVAH - a feeling of self-worth which stems from valuing your inborn strengths which were given to you by Hashem

Mashal for the ארבעה יסודות - the primary colors. Just like you can mix the primary colors to make an endless amount of colors, you can mix the ארבעה יסודות to make an endless number of *middos*. Everyone has all the יסודות, just in different proportions and amounts, which changes their personalities.

יסוד האש - When used negatively, makes two main *middos*:

ANGER - Opposing surroundings. Can only be used לשם שמים.

GA'AVAH - Competing with your surroundings. If you are trying to put down the other person, it still can't be used שלא לשמה. But if you are just trying to feel good about yourself, it could be used שלא לשמה as a method of reaching לשמה.

SUMMARY 010

WAYS OF RELATING TO DIFFICULT SITUATIONS:

- To accept it and work with it - comes from the יסוד האש, which can work hard despite the difficulty
- To fight it through denial, blaming others, or running away - also from the יסוד האש, which has the tendency to fight

3) To give in to it - from the יסוד העפר which is lazy, or from the יסוד המים, which tends to make peace with everything

The יסוד המים motivates a person to connect to something similar, and it changes a person slowly.

The יסוד האש motivates a person to object to something different than him, and it works in a more forceful and sudden way.

Just like there's more water than fire in the physical world, so too we need to use the יסוד המים more often than the יסוד האש in ourselves - we need to focus on the positive more than the negative.

TWO TYPES OF FEAR:

Negative fear - fear of the unknown, which is the opposite of Emunah and Bitachon

Positive fear - Fear of choosing wrongly and not utilizing my kochos

SUMMARY 011

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 יסוד האש is really a form of the middah of כעס - 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!

SUMMARY 012

The יסודות are not by definition good or bad. Every יסוד can be expressed either in a good way, or in a negative way.

Regarding יסוד הרוח:

- the good expression is a motivation to do meaningful things
- the negative expression is a drive to do meaningless things, such as just schmoozing without any purpose.

Regarding יסוד העפר:

- the good expression which we'll get to next week)
- the negative expression identifies with the body and - physicality. This expresses itself mainly as laziness, sadness, heaviness, and a low self-esteem.

The middah of ta'avah - the root is pleasure-seeking, from the יסוד המים. When it looks specifically for physical pleasures, that comes from it joining with the יסוד העפר.

SUMMARY 013

The middos of the יסוד העפר of our personalities act as are the "bridge" between the body and the נשמה, because they are the most similar to the body, which was mainly made from the physical יסוד העפר.

Since they associate closely with the body which was mainly made from the physical. They are the channel which can bring רוחניות to the body, purify it, and be מקדש it.

The יצה"ר tries to make them identify with the body, and be pulled down to גשמיות.

What is special about the יסוד העפר which gives it the ability to put things into practice?

The יסוד העפר has the ability to limit and break down a big dream into small, detailed tasks which can then be carried out in practice.

SUMMARY 014

יסוד העפר: Any *avodah* that we want should last long-term must be done through the יסוד העפר through precise recognition of the reality, an organized plan of action, and working consistently according to the plan. Without this, the whole *avodah* remains "floating in space".

In *avodas* Hashem as well, the goal is to feel ה'קירבת as an actual reality like the יסוד העפר, and not just as the lofty feelings which stem from the other יסודות.

ארבעה יסודות: The ארבעה יסודות perspective changes the whole picture of life - from a physical life which is run by separate drives, to a spiritual life whose root is one desire to be מ'מקיים רצון ה', and whose branches include all the myriad details of life!

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