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## Fixing Your Earth - 007 Solutions for Sadness Caused By Earth-of-Earth

### Introduction

Let us briefly review what we have learned until now.

There are *middos* of Hashem, *middos* of the Torah, and *middos* of a person. The *middos* of a person have three parts to them – the base *middos* which come from the **nefesh habehamis** (lower, animalistic part of the soul), the higher *middos* which come from our **nefesh Elohis** (deeper, G-dly layer of the soul), and the *middos* that are formed from **medameh** \ imagination, which is the part in the soul that is in between them. These are three sources of our *middos*.

We are discussing the lowest kind of *middos*, *middos* which stem from our **nefesh habehamis**. This lower part of our soul contains our four elements – earth, water, wind and fire. Each of the elements serves as the roots for our different *middos*.

Until now we have discussed the *middah* of *atzvus*/sadness on a general level. Now we will discuss it in more specific terms.

Sadness is rooted in our element of earth, as Rav Chaim Vital writes. Earth itself also contains within it earth, water, wind and fire. The earth in the earth produces a kind of sadness that has to do with feeling heavy. The water in our earth produces sadness that comes from failures. The wind in our earth causes sadness that comes from unfulfilled desires, and the fire in our earth produces sadness that has to do with strife or doubt.

We said before that sadness itself has sixteen possibilities, since there are four elements, and each of the elements contain four elements within them, for a total of sixteen possible reasons for sadness.

The Rambam writes a fundamental rule in serving Hashem: a person has to go to the opposite extreme direction (of his problem), until he eventually arrives at the middle path. When it comes to working on our *middos*, this will apply as follows: since we are dealing with the bad *middah* of sadness, which comes from the element of earth, if we want to fix it, we need to use the opposite of earth, and we need to keep using it until we eventually arrive at the middle point.

We will be using the natures of the different elements to help solve problems that come from our element of earth (sadness), and this will involve the unique nature of each element. Each element contains many details to its nature (for example, fire is hot and dry, while water is cold and moist).

Without getting into all the details of each element, we will explain how to use the other elements to fix our sadness.

This is the general formula. Most people have to work slowly and in steps in order to get to their opposite element, until they can arrive at the middle point of balancing out the uses between the elements.

### ***Solving Sadness Due to Messiness (Earth-of-Earth-of-Earth)***

The first kind of sadness which we mentioned earlier is when people feel sad because they feel like there is some messiness or dirtiness in their life, and the fact that they have to see this causes them to feel certain sadness inside. If a person is sad due to messiness, what can he do about this?

Earth is dark, and it is dirty. Fire, by contrast, is clean by nature (unless you put in some earth in it, which makes it smoky and thus murky).

If a person is sad, because he is used to seeing messiness in his life, the solution for him is to find some area of cleanliness in his life and focus on it.

For example, if a person is sad that his house is very messy, he can solve this sadness by finding a place in his house that's clean and focus on that. If a person can't find a clean place in his house, he can find a nice looking *sefer* and look at it, concentrating on the beauty of the clean *sefer*. A person who does this will find that this settles his mind.

How does this work? Until now, he was sad because he was thinking all the time about messiness, and this bothered him. Now he has removed his mind from thinking about messiness and dirtiness, and he has thoughts only about something clean. The concentration he has on cleanliness will serve as a light to the darkness in his mind, and it will make him feel more at ease.

It's not enough for this just to look at a clean place in your house or to look at a clean *sefer*. You have to concentrate on it and really let your mind be there. When you do this more and more, your sadness at the messiness in your life will weaken. The problem until now was that the soul was attached to messiness and dirtiness, and now it is attached instead to cleanliness, because you have put your mind to think about places that are clean.

### ***Solving Sadness Due To Feeling Heavy (Water-of-Earth-of-Earth)***

The next kind of sadness we mentioned is sadness which comes from the aspect of **water** in our **earth**, which is when a person has an intense materialistic desire, and the desire itself allows a person no inner peace, making him feel sad inside at the very fact that he has a desire.

This kind of sadness we can find by people who have strong cravings for food. A person feels sad inside at the very fact that he has the craving – the desire itself for something physical makes him feel tied down to it, resulting in his sadness.

When a person is eating a meal and then he finishes, what does he feel? Many people feel heavy at the end of a meal. But this isn't the healthy feeling we are supposed to have from eating. It is written, "*A righteous person eats to satisfy his soul.*" We eat in order to survive, not for the sake of indulging. Yet many people, when they finish eating, do not feel satisfied – they feel rather a sort of heaviness.

Even when people eat the Shabbos meal, they feel "heavy" afterwards, instead of feeling satisfied from it.

Some people eat a lot because they have a problem of overeating, and this is a desire which comes from the element of water in the soul, the root of desire. Others don't necessarily overeat, it is just that when they finish eating, they do not feel satisfied from the meal and just feel heavy afterwards. This feeling of "heaviness" comes from the water of the earth in the soul. How can a person deal with this sadness?

There are two kinds of food we eat - thick foods, and light foods. Usually, eating thicker foods increases the desires of the body, while lighter foods don't produce cravings. The soul, deep down, recoils from thick foods, because since the soul by nature is very refined, it doesn't want to be connected to the thick materialism that the body naturally likes. If we eat lighter foods, we will find that it doesn't make us feel heavy afterwards, and our soul will be more at ease with this, the more we get used to this.

Another solution that can solve this kind of sadness is to leave over some food on the plate. Get used to leaving over some food, and then you can eventually work on eating less and less until you are only eating what you need to eat.

### ***Solving Sadness Due To Despair (Wind-of-Earth-of-Earth)***

Next is the sadness which comes from the **wind** in our **earth**. When a person has something he wants very badly and then he gives up on it, this feeling of despair can create sadness in him. Wind can take something and lift it up; when a person doesn't feel that uplift, he is sad, because he is missing that "wind." This is the feeling of sadness that comes upon a person when he despairs from getting something he wanted very badly. Without wind, a person has nothing to uplift him, and he remains in his earth, causing him to despair. What can he do about this?

He needs to find hope in some area, and that will increase his wind. When a person feels that he has given up on much on his life, he can still find hope in some area in his life. A deeper level than this is for a person to place his hope in Hashem, but a person can use the power of hope on a basic level; hope is a power found even in the *nefesh habehamis*, the lower part of the soul. Any person can find hope in some area in his life.

### ***Solving Sadness Due To Doubt (Fire-of-Earth-of-Earth)***

The sadness which comes from the **fire** of our **earth** is when a person feels "darkness" in his life - when he feels a great lack of clarity in his life.

This can manifest itself in either one of two ways. Either he feels that his life in general is full of darkness - he doesn't have any clarity in his life - or he finds that his mind cannot think properly, because he is full of doubt.

When a person feels a great darkness in his life, the solution for this is that he has to give himself some light. Looking at a candle light can increase the light of the soul and shed some light on the inner darkness one feels. This is a superficial solution, but it can work. This should be done with the intention of increasing light into your life; merely looking at a candle won't help with this. Although it is a superficial solution, it can only work if you put thought into it.

The inner solution, though, is for a person to return to the points in his life that he can receive "light" from. He can focus on the parts in his life that are clear to him, which will soothe the unrest in his soul that comes from his lack of clarity. Focus on those areas in which you do have clarity in your life, and that can shed some light onto the darkness in your life.

### ***In Conclusion***

In this chapter, we have given solutions to sadness by learning how to make use of the opposite elements of earth. There are more solutions to earth which we did not cover here. We have explained here how to use the opposite of earth in specific terms of earth-earth, water-earth, wind-earth and fire-earth. In general, though, wind and fire are the opposites of earth, and they can be used to help solve earth-based problems.

There are deeper solutions as well that can solve sadness, such as by coming out of one's ego and learning how to love other Jews, or by learning more Torah, or by connecting more with Hashem. These are solutions that are drawn from the deeper, spiritual power of our **nefesh Elohis**. What we have addressed here, however, are solutions that come from even the lowest part of our soul - the **nefesh habehamis**; therefore, they can be utilized by a person on any level.

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