



Understanding Your Middos - 05 Conceptualization Vs Visualization

Every Force in Creation Is Found In The Soul

Let us continue to discuss the additional points about our element of earth.

We will first give a short introduction: Although we have brought the words of Rav Chaim Vital that the negative traits which result from earth are laziness and sadness (sadness is the root, while laziness is its branch), those are just the *middos* that come from our earth. Our four elements of the soul contain more than just *middos*; they contain every force in Creation. There's nothing in Creation that you can't find manifested in one of the four elements of the soul.

Since all of Creation is found in our soul, then understandably, there are endless details to the soul. Yet, although the details are endless, we will still try to understand the forces in Creation that are found in our element of earth in the soul.

We are not coming here to explain this as a kind of science. We are discussing "earth", but we are not studying physical earth; we are studying the earth of the soul.

We will try as much as Hashem allows us to in this, and to probe into the understanding of some of the forces found in our element of earth. We will try to see how a certain matter manifests in our soul, what damages it can cause when left untreated, and then how to fix it.

Let us continue to discuss more about *atzvus*, which is what we are currently learning about – and with the help of Hashem, we will learn about the various matters that branch out from this concept.

Earth Makes Formations

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the word *atzvus* has many meanings. It can mean simply sadness, or it can mean to become constricted. It can also mean "to form", as we find in the possuk, "*Your hands fashioned ("atzvuni") and made me.*"[\[1\]](#)

Therefore, there is a connection between sadness and forming things, since both of these concepts are usages of the word "*atzvus*." Sadness can therefore "form" things, as formation is a concept that branches out of sadness. Let us try to understand what this power of "formation" is and the connection that it bears to *atzvus*\sadness.

In the four elements, which of them is used to form things? Fire cannot form things. Although fire sometimes can have a shape to it, it's constantly changing its form, so it has no permanent form. Wind is air, so it definitely has no form. Water naturally does not have a form; you can put it in a cup and contain it, but water by itself has no form to itself.

Only the element of earth has a form to it. Hashem used earth to create from it the mountains, hills, and valleys. So earth is the element which is used to make formations. If so, we can understand that

our power to make formations comes from our element of earth. Man was fashioned from earth, and thus our entire power to make formations comes from our element of earth.

Now, if someone has a weak amount of earth in his soul, then his power to make formations will also be weak. If someone has a strong amount of earth in himself, he will have a stronger ability to “form” things.

The Arizal says that originally, all souls were contained in Adam’s soul, and then they split up into Kayin and Hevel. Hevel was a shepherd – someone who deals with animals - hinting to the animalistic aspect of a person. Kayin, however, was a farmer. He dealt more with earth, hinting to the ability in a person to fashion and form things. Therefore, if someone’s soul is rooted in Kayin, he has more of an ability to form things, a nature of earth.

Forming Things Through Our Actions, Thoughts, and Fantasies

There are three kinds of formations we can do: in action, in thought, and through fantasizing.

The first kind of forming we find is by Kayin, the first farmer – who was able to fashion things out of the ground. This is physical formation – to simply fashion an item out of the natural materials found in the ground.

There is a spiritual kind of formation, and this is the ability in a person to be able to form things with his thoughts. This is called *tzurasa d’shmaatsa* (body of the discussion) by our Chazal; it is when a person develops a structured way to understand things.

A third kind of formation is the ability in a person to imagine things. Reb Yisrael Salanter wrote that “a person freely roams around in his imagination”, and the reason for this is because “a man is entirely made up of fantasies”, as one of our Rabbis write. Man is *adam* in Hebrew, which comes from the word *dimayon*, imagination; because since a person fantasizes a lot, there is a tendency in a person to form things through the imagination.

So these are the three ways how we can form things: **1)** Physical, material formations. **2)** Forming something through our thoughts. **3)** Forming something through our imagination.

First let us think into what it means to “form” something, and then we can understand what these three different abilities are.

Before The Sin and After the Sin - How We Perceive Our Sins

There are two words in the Torah which can mean to “form”. One word is *tzurah*, as we find in the possuk, “*And Hashem fashioned man out of the dirt of the earth.*” Another word for formation is *itzuv*, from the words *atzvus*, as we find in the possuk, “*You fashioned and made me.*”

These are two different kinds of formations – *itzuv*, and *tziyur*. What is the difference between them?

Itzuv is to make a formation out of its original material. *Tzurah* is to take something from outside the material and to combine it together, reshaping it with the added material. An example of *tzurah* is to take a shape and carve it into the material. There is a huge difference between these two kinds of formation – and thus our soul has two totally different ways on how to form things, which we will explain.

After Adam sinned, he was cursed with, “*Earth you are, and to earth you shall return.*” What was the first part of the curse, “*Earth you are*”? If the curse to mankind was that there would now be death,

then the second part of the curse, *"To earth you shall return"*, makes sense. But what is the first part of the curse - *"Earth you are"*? Adam was already earth, even before he sinned, because he was fashioned out of earth. So why he is being cursed now with *"Earth you are"*?

As we are about to explain, the depth of the curse was really this fact, that *"earth you are"*.

Why are we called "earth"? True, our body was made from earth, but we have a soul as well. We are made up of body and soul; so why are we as people defined as "earth"?

The answer is: the first sin made man define himself as earth! The fact that man perceives himself as earth is all a result of the sin. Before the sin, man was not called *"earth you are"*, because he instead perceived himself as the G-dly spirit that resided within him. Before the sin, man was defined by the fact that he is *ruach memalelah*, a "social" creature. That was the soul which was breathed into him - the ability to articulate his speech, which differentiates man from an animal. After the sin, however, man is now defined as *"earth you are"* - in other words, because of the sin, our perception of how we view ourselves changed.

This is the depth of the difference between before the sin with after the sin. Before the sin, man would identify himself as a pure soul, and thus man was defined as a soul, a G-dly spirit. He realized that his body was just a garment on top of his true self. After the sin, man's self-esteem got lowered, and now he views himself initially as *"earth you are."*

What results from all of this is that since after the sin we identify ourselves as earth, and earth has in it the power to make formations, then ever since the first sin, we have identified our power to make formations as our essence, and not merely as a garment covering over our true self.

Before the sin, a person viewed the element of earth as simply a container for his other three elements of fire, water and wind. He viewed earth as his garment, and thus he viewed his power to make formations as just a garment, not as his essence. After the sin, however, a person thinks that his power to make formations is his essence.

Now we can really understand the difference between *tziyur* and *itzuv*. The possuk uses the word *"tziyur"* in describing how Hashem fashioned man out of earth. This shows us that before the sin, man's power to make formations is viewed as just a garment of himself, but not as his essence. After the sin, however, Adam was cursed with *etzev*\pain, which is a usage of the word *itzuv*. *Itzuv* is the ability to make formations which came about after sin - in which a person identifies his essence as "someone who can make formations."

So when we view our ability to make formations as just a garment over ourselves - but we are aware that it's only an ability we have, and that it does not define who we are - then such formation is called *tzurah*. However, if we think that we are defined by our power to make formations, then this is called *itzuv* - the viewpoint of after the sin.

When a person thinks that his essence is a formation from the ground, and that his ability to make formations defines who he is - this is *itzuv*, the lower view. If we adapt the higher attitude, however, which is *tzurah*, then we realize that although we were fashioned from the earth, we are really above the earth; that there is more to us than just being able to be creative and form things.

The Difference Between Hashem's Creations and Human Creations

Chazal state, "Come and see how the trait of the Holy Blessed One is not like the trait of a human. A human fashions an image on a wall and he cannot breathe into it a spirit of life, insides and intestines; the Holy Blessed One is not like this, for He can fashion images within images and breathe into them

a spirit of life. This is what Channah said, “*There is no ‘rock’ like Hashem*” – there is no “artist” like Hashem.”[2]

What is the depth to this, that Hashem can fashion images and breathe into them a spirit of life? Besides for the simple meaning of this, which is true, we can understand these words of Chazal with greater clarity, according to the concept we have explained earlier. A human being can fashion images, but the images are never made from the actual essence of the material. By contrast, Hashem took the dirt and made man from it – the essence of man’s life comes from the spirit of life which Hashem breathed into the person, while the physical material that man is made out of is not his essence, but rather a garment covering over his essence.

That is the difference. Human beings can make all kinds of things from the earth, but they are essentially creations made out of earth and nothing more. But when Hashem makes something, the material He uses to make isn’t the essence of what He is making, but rather, the spirit of life He breathes into it is the actual essence of His creation. To illustrate this concept, there was a miracle that the Aron was able to lift itself on its own; the spirit of life breathed into it from Hashem was enabling the Aron to life itself. This is an example of the perfected kind of *tzurah*, [which only Hashem can make].

When a *tzurah* formation does not contain in it a breath of life from Hashem, it remains merely as a carving, which is *itzuv*, from the word *itzavon*, sadness. *Tzurah* also comes from the word *tzarah*, “pain” – and this hints to how *tzurah* and *itzuv* are both the same idea. The kind of *tzurah* that is “*tzarah*” – a “sad” kind of formation – reflects the meaning of “*For you are earth, and to earth you shall return.*”

The body of every person disintegrates in the grave (unless he is someone who became extremely holy in his lifetime). His *tzurah* vanishes, but when a person is resurrected by the future *techiyas hameisim* (revival of the dead), he attains a new *tzurah*. Why does a person’s original *tzurah* have to vanish in the first place? It is because a person’s original *tzurah* does not represent the true kind of *tzurah*, for man is fashioned out of the earth, which represents sadness. But when the original *tzurah* of man vanishes in the grave, a person sees that his *tzurah* was not his essence, and it was merely a garment – a kind of *itzuv*, a mere formation. That is exactly how the *tzurah* of man gets rectified.

Tzaddikim (righteous individuals), however, merited in their lifetime to realize what their true *tzurah* is, and that their physical body is just a garment over their true essence – and therefore, the body of the righteous individual does not disintegrate in the grave.

The Power of Tziyur\Imagination

How does a person use the power of *tzurah* for holiness, and how it is used detrimentally? Here we come to a very subtle point in the soul. We will try to explain it.

There are two ways how we conceptualize something. When we are informed that someone got into an accident and his car smashed into a building, what are we thinking as we hear this story? Do we process it as intellectual information, or do we picture the story in our heads, visualizing the car as it smashes into the wall?

As children, whenever we heard a story about a Torah personality, we naturally pictured them in the stories. A child is so used to picturing things that when he is taught about Hashem, there is a tendency to try to picture Hashem, *chas v’shalom*. It is forbidden to try to give a picture to Hashem – as it is written, “*To whom can you compare Me, to that I should be an equal with?*”[3]; yet people have this tendency, since they are young, to try to picture Hashem.

From where does this nature come from? It comes from the nature of earth in the soul. Because earth is the source of giving picture to things, we tend to give a mental picture to everything that we hear about. We tend to visualize a concept as soon as we hear about it, immediately picturing it in our heads.

As an example of what we mean, if someone hears about a building on his street, he doesn't have to picture it, because he already recognizes it. Even if he has never actual seen the building but only in a picture, when he is told about the building, he doesn't have to picture it, because he already knows in his head about this building. But when someone is being described a building that he has never seen or hears about before, and it's the first time he is hearing about this building, how does he process the information? He will immediately imagine it. This is called "*dimayon*", imagination. People are not ready to just conceptualize something unless they can visualize it in their head - this is the power of imagination.

People tend to imagine because by nature, we tend to give "*tzurah*" to everything we hear about. When we don't know what the accurate *tzurah* of something is, we imagine how it looks, but either way, we keep giving "*tzurah*" to everything in our heads.

This power in human beings contains a gain and a drawback. The gain of imagination is that it helps us understand something better. We can see this from the fact that we are supposed to understand a *moshol* (parable) and its *nimshal* (lesson); hearing the *moshol* helps us understand the *nimshal* that we are supposed to take out of the story (Of course, there is always a possibility that a person will get carried away with his imagination and misunderstand the *moshol*, which will lead him to take out the wrong *nimshal*). The prophets as well were able to give proper *tzurah* in their heads to the information being poured down upon them from Hashem. They knew how to use the power of *tzurah* in the proper way. This is how we see *tzurah* being used constructively.

But there is a drawback to using *tzurah*. Besides for the problem we mentioned earlier in using *tzurah* - which is that a person will not understand the *moshol* properly and thus take out the wrong lesson from it - there is another problem. Even if a person does know how to figure out the *nimshal* from a *moshol*, because he has a good imagination, the problem is that by getting used to *tzurah* too much, the *tzurah* will become "*tzarah*", "pain." We will explain what this means.

The word *tzarah* comes from the word *tzar*, which means "narrow." In other words, when a person is picturing something, he is apt to perceive only a narrowed perception of the concept. When a person imagines something, the imagination is essentially narrowing the information and limiting it to the bounds of the imagination. The person will then only receive a limited perception of the concept, because he has tried to understand it through imagination. Our imagination is, after all, limited to what we can imagine.

When we use imagination, we try to give something a mental kind of picture, but these images are all somehow lodged in our head from something else we have seen. We try to make the new picture somehow fit a previous picture in our heads, while in reality, it doesn't necessarily fit that picture.

Another drawback to imagination is that we are not able to imagine something which we aren't able to identify with. When we imagine things, we are always using the giant videotape that has developed in our mind throughout our entire life, and we are attempting (erroneously) to use some previous image lodged in our heads in order to be able to understand anything we come across. If our imagination isn't able to use the full version of a previous mental image, it will break up a previous image and use some parts of it to once again try to perceive new information we come across, and form a new picture, based on the old information.

Imagination is thus using our power of *tziyur*. Of course, our imagination certainly changes the original *tzurah* of a concept, but it is essentially a distortion and exaggeration of the same old information. Our imagination can exaggerate information in our heads, but it cannot really come up with anything new. It will always fall back on some previous image in the mind and use that to understand something.

Our imagination is thus limited, and it cannot imagine beyond what it can picture. It will not accept any information that it cannot picture. This is the drawback of imagination – it is a limited kind of perception, because it is always a narrow-minded kind of understanding.

True Conceptualization

Now we can understand the depths to the words of our Sages we brought earlier, which is that Hashem fashions images and breathes life into them, while humans, by contrast, cannot.

Because we have a breath of life from Hashem that was breathed into us, we are able to transcend the lower kind of *tziyur* and attain a true kind of *tziyur*. The higher kind of *tziyur* which we can use is not the regular kind of mental picturing which we just addressed. What is it, and how does it differ from regular imagination?

We have mentioned earlier that there are three kinds of *tzurah*: to simply make a physical object; to imagine; and to intellectualize.

We are able to use *tzurah* even without imagination: we can intellectualize the information, without picturing it. This is the meaning of “*tzurah d’shmaatsa*” which we mentioned earlier. When a person is learning in the Gemara about an ox goring a cow, he will tend to imagine the scenario, and if he has a vivid kind of imagination, he will imagine all the details going on. He will find that his knowledge of the Gemara’s discussion here has become clearer. In fact, many people who have a vivid kind of imagination possess a quality in that they see all the details going on, and therefore they gain greater clarity in knowing what the *Halacha* is; most people who are like this often aspire to become a *poisek* (Halachic authority). Vivid imagination can help a person know what’s really going on in what he learns in Gemara; that’s an obvious gain.

But that’s only one side of the coin. The drawback here is that if a person uses imagination a lot in trying to understand the Gemara, his understanding gets limited to what he’s imagining. In reality, the laws of the ox goring the cow are not limited to an ox and a cow. They apply to many more situations which do not involve an ox and a cow.

A classic example of this concept is *ben sorer u’moreh* (the rebellious child).^[4] The Gemara devotes an entire lengthy chapter to delve into the laws of *ben sorer u’moreh*, yet, the Sages revealed that *ben sorer u’moreh* never happened, and it never will happen. If so, the Sages ask, why do we learn about *ben sorer u’moreh*? It is so that we should get reward for learning about it. In this, the Sages revealed to us a certain fundamental concept: Even if something isn’t going to happen in the practical sense, there is still what to gain from when we just learn about it on the purely intellectual level.

Of course, the Sages also said that “Learning Torah is great, for it brings one to proper deeds”^[5], and this implies that we are supposed our Torah learning practical in our lives. This is true, but the Sages revealed to us through *ben sorer u’moreh* that we contain as well a deep power in our soul: to gain an intellectual understanding of a matter, even if it will not lead to anything practical.

We do not mean that one should not try to understand what the *halacha* is and not be concerned for practicality in how to act. We of course have to learn *halacha*, and we must know how to act in the practical sense. But it is just that we also have to learn about Torah concepts that are purely

intellectual, even if there will be no gain from this learning when it comes to how we act in *halacha*.

To give a simple example of what we mean, when you ask a person what two plus two is, and he answers four, what is he thinking? Does he have to picture in his head two apples and then two apples, or can he just think “two plus two is four”? When we teach math to children, we use illustrations to help them, so we show them picture of two apples plus two apples. Adults can figure out the answer quickly, and without having to see an illustration.

This power can be used in an inner way: that a person is able to simply conceptualize a fact, without having to picture it.

Chochmah and Tevunah

The following concept helps us better understand the true use of *tzurah*. Our mind contains two abilities – *chochmah* (wisdom, or knowledge) and *tevunah* (understanding). *Chochmah* represents the raw material of the information, when it is undeveloped and unstructured. *Tevunah*, though, is when the information is built upon and developed; *Tevunah* is from the word *binyan*, to “build.”

Women are blessed with extra Binah[6]; they possess a greater ability of *tzurah*, to give form to the information. We see this from the roles of of husband and wife, when they unite to have a child. The husband provides the actual droplet, which is the raw substance that has the potential to become a child. The woman’s body takes the raw droplet and develops it, giving formation to the droplet – until it eventually emerges a child. This is because women represent *Tevunah\|binyan*, the idea that represents the power of true *tzurah*.

Changing Our Thought Process

Most people are using [the undeveloped kind of] *tzurah* in trying to understand Torah. As a result, the actual wisdom of the Torah is often not being accessed, and people are only giving a mental picture in their heads to try to perceive the Torah’s information. The actual wisdom of the Torah, besides for affecting us practically, goes much further than the practical use of the Torah’s information.

Here we come to a deep point in how we use our soul: that we need to come out of our perception based on *tzurah*.

Originally, before the sin of Adam (and again as we stood at Har Sinai) we were able to use *tzurah* as an accurate way of understanding things. This was the actual ability known as *tzurasa d’shmaatsa*. After the sin of Adam [and once again after the sin with the Golden Calf], our power of *tzurah* was damaged, and it instead became a tendency in people to give something a mental kind of imagery, which is an inaccurate understanding of the information. The true way to conceptualize something, *tzurasa d’shmaatsa*, has nothing to do imagining something in the physical sense. It is about intellectualizing the information, without trying to give it a physical kind of picture in our minds.

The Torah can be learned with two different kinds of perception. Matters that we learned in Torah can either be imagined vividly, or they can be learned on a purely intellectual level. The second kind is that when a person learns a sugya[7] of Gemara, he sees the *tzurah* of the *sugya*. These are two kinds of perception which our soul is capable of.

Before the sin, our thinking process was entirely *chochmah\|wisdom*. Now that we are after the sin, “a person does not sin unless a spirit of folly enters him.”[8] How did that original spirit of folly enter us in the first place? It was because “the eyes see, then the heart desires – and then the vessels of action complete.” First Chava laid eyes on the tree, and then she desired it. This shows us how visualization of a concept makes a person think that he understands what a concept it – and that

such a perception can lead to sin.

It is written, “*My heart has seen much wisdom.*”^[9] Before the sin of Adam, our perception was pure; we perceived things through *tzurasa d’shmaatsa*. We perceived things through actual conceptualization. After the sin, the “eye sees and the heart desires”; we initially seek to understand something only in the practical sense, or if we can imagine it. This kind of perception, when we remain with, leaves us at our element of earth, which represents the lowest realm – the “world of action”, in which “action” becomes the focus [as opposed to intellect].

Before the sin there was no need for the 613 mitzvos, because man lived in a higher realm than “the world of action”; man lived in the plane of intellect, and everything was perceived through *tzurasa d’shmaatsa*. Once Adam sinned, man descended to a lower kind of existence – the realm of action, and thus now we need the 613 mitzvos, which are actions.

At the giving of the Torah, Hashem commanded us “*For you shall see no image.*” The depth of this matter was that true perception is not attained through mental imagery, but rather through pure intellectualization of a matter, with no physical picture involved.

There are people who can only understand something if they can picture it. They need to be able to smell something, or to taste it, or to see its color. These kinds of people are very entrenched in the lowest kind of existence, the realm of action, and thus they need to be able to clothe everything with the physical. But when a person lives a more internal kind of life, he gains the intellectual perspective on things, and he will be able to understand things even if they don’t have some practical application.

Of course, we do not mean to negate the fact that we must seek practicality; if one ignores practicality, he is denying the Torah, because then he isn’t keeping it. But what we mean is that besides for knowing the practicality of matters, we also must develop an interest to be able to explore a matter on the purely intellectual level, even when something doesn’t have a practical outcome.

The more a person leaves the lower perception coming from “the world of action” and he enters the perspective of a Torah scholar, he’s building the world, because Torah scholars are called builders of the world. He is building his thoughts, even though these buildings cannot be physically seen. And when he learns Gemara, not only does he picture the entire scenario going on so that he can get down to the practicalities of the *sugya*, but he also thinks about the *sugya* on a purely intellectual level.

In the language of the Sages, this concept is called “remove your body from your soul.” In more down-to-earth language, there are two ways in how we approach learning Torah: to seek the practical applications of what we learn about it, which involves the use of our imagination; and to learn about a matter in Torah even we were to be informed that the matter will never be relevant in the practical sense. The second kind is *tzurasa d’shamaatsa*.

One of the Sages is praised for having never seen the image of a coin.^[10] The depth behind this matter is that the less we get used to physical imagery, the more we will be able to identify with *tzurasa d’shmaatsa*.

The Depth of Teshuvah: Returning To The State of Adam Before the Sin

To summarize this chapter thus far, we have differentiated between two kinds of perception: the mentality that is called *itzuv*, and the mentality that is called *tzurah*. When a person can have a purely intellectual kind of conceptualization of a matter, this is called *tzurah*. When a person focuses on *tzurah*, though – when he needs to imagine something in the physical sense, in order to identify with the concept at hand – this is called *itzuv*.

This was really the depth behind the curse placed on Adam: “*Earth you are, and to earth you shall return.*” Man has to die, because that is the only way for him to leave his element of earth. By contrast, before the sin, there was no concept of death, because man would have been able to transcend his element of earth, for he had the true *tzurah* (image) that he had originally been created with.

We, of course, are not on the level of Adam before the sin. But we can try to draw ourselves closer, somewhat, to that pure state. When we do *teshuvah* for sins, there are two aspects to our *teshuvah*. We need to *teshuvah* for our various private sins, the “branches” of the problem. But we also need to do *teshuvah* for the root of all sins – the sin of Adam. If we attain this kind of *teshuvah*, we are able to touch the kind of spiritual light that existed before the first sin – each of us can do this, according to our own respective levels.

We have explained thus far the three kinds of *tzurah* altogether. We have explained two kinds of physical *tzurah* - seeking practicality, and the use of imagination. We have also explained spiritual *tzurah*.

Attaining Our True Tzurah

We all need to attain our *tzurah*; being human means that we all have a certain *tzurah*. Hashem fashioned man out of the earth, so we all have *tzurah*. Although we have explained here how *tzurah* affected mankind in the negative sense, that is only if we remain with our undeveloped *tzurah*, in which the only way to erase this *tzurah* is through death. If we attain the ideal kind of *tzurah*, we won't need death to return us to the right kind of *tzurah*.

How do we remove ourselves from the undeveloped kind of *tzurah* and attain the true *tzurah*? We do not want to erase and destroy our *tzurah*; rather, we want to develop it. How can we do it?

Since *tzurah* is a nature in our element of earth, we will need to find which of the other three elements can improve the earth: wind, fire and water. Wind and fire are unfeasible, since they destroy *tzurah*. Fire simply destroys, so it cannot be used to improve our *tzurah*. Wind doesn't destroy *tzurah*, but it breaks *tzurah*. So we cannot use fire or wind to improve our *tzurah*, because we are not trying to destroy or break our undeveloped *tzurah*. The only time we have to break and destroy images is by idols, in which we have a *mitzvah* to break them. But when it comes to the *tzurah* of a human, which is holy, we cannot use any methods that break or destroy.

The way to improve *tzurah* is through using the element of water. Water will not break through the *tzurah*; instead it takes the *tzurah* and spreads it out. Water can return the *tzurah* to the way it is supposed to look like.

We can see this from the following *halachah*. If someone steals something and he changes the physical formation of the item he stole, it's considered changed, and he does not have to return the item he stole.[\[11\]](#) But if a person steals water that was congealed and then it melts, this is not considered a change to the water, and he has to return the water he stole. Water doesn't change its form; it simply contracts or expands its own form.

The element of earth is the root of all *tzurah*, and earth can't expand its *tzurah*. Any changes that happen to earth make it into a totally new *tzurah*. But the element of water can take *tzurah* and expand it and develop it. In the element of water lies the key to giving true *tzurah* to the element of earth.[\[12\]](#)

[1] Iyov 10:8

[2] Berachos 10a

[3] Yeshayahu 4:25

[4] See Tractate Sanhedrin, Chapter Eight

[5] Bava Kamma 17a

[6] Niddah 45b

[7] section of Gemara

[8] Sotah 2a

[9] Koheles 1:16

[10] Pesachim 104a

[11] But he must pay for the item he stole; see Bava Kamma, Chapter Nine.

[12] We will learn more about the element of water beginning from Chapter 31.

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/understanding-your-middos-05-conceptualization-vs-visualization>