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Wind-of-Water - Getting Dragged Impulsively

We will continue, with Hashem's help, our discussion on the topic of desires. We will now discuss desires which stem from '**wind**' aspect of-water-of-water in the soul.

As we have explained previously, desire stemming from **water-of-water** is when a person is 'dragged' after the desire. When desires of this nature are causing a person to perform many **movements** in order to get to the desire, however, it is particularly coming from the 'wind' **aspect** that is within water-of-water.

A person might get dragged after desires and engage in rapid movements as he's getting dragged toward it, in four different kinds of scenarios: earth, water, wind and fire. So within **wind-of-water-of-water**, there will be four divisions: **(1) Earth**-of-Wind-of-Water-of-Water, **(2) Water**-of-Wind-of-Water-of-Water, **(3) Wind**-of-Wind-of-Water-of-Water, **(4) Fire**-of-Wind-of-Water-of-Water.

1) Imitating The Surroundings, Out of Anxiousness

The first kind of scenario of getting 'dragged' is when a person is permanently dragged after his surroundings, and as a result, his actions are always carried out in a chaotic manner. This is stemming from an aspect of **earth**, due to the permanent nature of the actions, because earth is the root of permanence. And since this kind of dragging after the surroundings is causing a person to act quickly, it is coming from **earth**-of-wind-of-wind-of-water.

These are people who act very anxiously. Their life is spent in a constant state of *behalah* (chaos). When a person feels empty inside himself from any inner content, he will get dragged after his surroundings. When a person is dragged after doing what his surroundings do and he does this on a set basis, and as a result his life becomes a constant *behalah*\chaos, he will be dragged after even the smallest thing taking place in his surroundings.

To illustrate, a child is always involved with small noises, such as playing with his toys. Every small noise in his surroundings pulls him after it. A child has no *daas* (mature understanding) and therefore he forgets about the noises a second later, so he doesn't become permanently attached to what goes on in his surroundings.

An adult, however, although he has *daas*, if he gets dragged after noises, might become pulled after his surroundings on a set basis, on even anything that goes on. His life becomes a state of *behalah*\chaos, because his thoughts are constantly getting dragged after different things that his

surroundings are engaged in.

Such people are always acting in a nervous manner. Their life is full of internal suffering. They suffer on this world and don't get *chiyus* (vitality) from what they do, and they don't get reward for this either in the Next World. This person spends his whole life in a *behalah* – his thoughts are constantly unfocused in whatever he does. He doesn't have *chiyus* from what he does or from what his surroundings do, and he merely does everything because he's dragged after society and copies his surroundings.

This kind of person will “do what he has to do” and therefore he will do all the actions in life that he needs to perform, but only because his surroundings do so, and not because he is acting from within himself. He lives life superficially. He doesn't feel any vitality from what he does. His thoughts are in constant chaos from always doing whatever everyone else does, and therefore everything he does is done out of anxiousness, with no inner vitality to it.

2) Curiosity Towards Surroundings

The next kind of dragging is from **water** within wind-of-water-of-water. This is when a person is dragged from one thing to the next after he begins to get dragged after his surroundings.

For example, when a person walks into a supermarket to buy something he needs, but along the way, he gets dragged after many other items in the store and buys more items than what he needed. A person takes in his surroundings and feels a desire to explore the entire place, dragged after one aisle to the next, in his curiosity.

Some people are always finding themselves dragged after one particular thing, while there are others who simply have a nature to get dragged from one thing to another, out of curiosity; it is the second kind of person that we are addressing.

To give another example, some people love to talk, and they can keep talking more and more about different matters, and they have a nature to talk continuously without being able to stop. This is an example of someone who keeps getting dragged from one topic to the next, and he keeps going and going, finding it very hard to stop himself; this is an example of the problem we are currently describing.

There are people who have a very talkative nature, but as soon as they are told that they're talking too much, or when they get the hint, they'll stop talking; this kind of person doesn't have the problem of constantly getting dragged, because he knows how to catch himself as he's getting dragged. But others cannot stop talking and they keep changing the topic of their conversation without stopping, and the root of this problem is because they are continuously dragged from one thing to another; we are addressing this kind of person.

3) Quick Impulsiveness

The next kind of getting dragged can be coming from the **wind** within wind-of-water-of-water. This is when a person is dragged after the surroundings and he quickly moves towards what he's being dragged after.

It's another kind of *behalah* (acting chaotic) which we discussed earlier, but the difference is that earlier when we discussed *behalah*, we discussed a *behalah* that is coming from the element of **earth** within wind-of-water-of-water, which is when a person is dragged after surroundings on a set basis. Such a person, although he acts chaotic as a result of always doing what society does, still has some *yishuv hadaas* (settled mind). But now we are discussing another kind of *behalah*, which comes from

wind (in wind-of-water-of-water), the root of quick movement.

This is when a person rapidly moves toward something in his surroundings, and he moves towards it anxiously, because he has become so curious. The person here is so dragged into what goes in his surroundings that he will move towards it very quickly.

To illustrate, there is a kind of person who will see an argument going on, and he will quickly get involved in the argument too, even if he has nothing to do with the argument. The person gets dragged into what's going on in his surroundings, and he quickly involves himself in what's going on, even when it's about something that has nothing to do with him. So he's not just being dragged; he's rapidly moving towards whatever he's being dragged after.

If a person moves very quickly to something that he really needs, this is understandable. But here we are discussing a person who is quickly dragged into something that he doesn't need to get involved in. The only reason why he gets involved is because he has an impulsive nature to get dragged after what goes on in his surroundings.

4) Passionate Impulsiveness

The next scenario of getting dragged is when it is coming from **fire** (within wind-of-wind-of-water). This takes the previous scenario of wind and takes it even further. It is when a person becomes full of fiery passion as he's getting dragged into something going on in his surroundings, even when it's about something that has nothing to do with him.

In the previous case we discussed, which was wind, in which a person gets involved in an argument that he really has nothing to do with, he is only doing so out of curiosity and excitement. He doesn't feel a connection to the argument, but he involves himself anyway, simply because he is impulsive.

But in the current case we are discussing, fire, a person will not only get involved with something going on in his surroundings that he doesn't have to do with; he will get involved in it passionately, feeling personally connected to the argument, thinking that he really does have something to do with this argument, when in reality, this argument has nothing to do with him, and he is just acting like a hothead.

If this nature is used for holiness, it is when a person is burning for the *emes* (truth) and therefore he gets very passionate when he feels that he must defend and fight for *emes*. But others are simply getting dragged after a desire to involve themselves with the surroundings, and they can get sparked up to pursue something that they don't need. It is this second kind of person we are discussing.

In the previous scenario we discussed, which was **wind**, a person moves quickly to involve himself with what's going on in his surroundings that he's curious about, even when those things have nothing to do with him. But in the case we are discussing, when the impulsive dragging is stemming from **fire**, a person feels that he needs to pursue something even though it has no relevance to him, and he thinks that it really does have relevance to him personally.

For example, much *machlokes* (strife) that goes on in today's times is often fire-related, not wind-related. A person today who gets caught up in *machlokes* not simply out of curiosity and impulsiveness, but because he thinks that he has a personal involvement with the *machlokes* and that he belongs in it, while in reality, he really had nothing to do with this *machlokes*. He involved himself in the *machlokes* when he really shouldn't have, and he enters it with fiery passion, feeling that he must get involved. (This resembles the nature of the *machlokes* of Korach and his followers...)

So getting dragged into surroundings due to **wind** is when a person knows he's pursuing something

that's not for him to pursue, and he is simply acting impulsively because he is curious, while **fire** is when a person feels emotionally involved with something in his surroundings that is really not for him to pursue, because he convinces himself that he is supposed to get involved.

We have described all of the problems; now we will go through the solutions, with the help of Hashem.

1. 1. **Discovering Your Individuality**

First we will go through the solution of the problem in the first scenario, when a person is dragged after his surroundings on set basis, and thus all of his actions are performed chaotically and anxiously. This kind of dragging comes from **earth** (within wind-of-water-of-water).

Whenever a person is dragged after something, whether it's a particular object that catches his curiosity or whether he is always copying whatever society does, the inner reason behind this is that he is really being dragged out of his "I." Whenever he pursues something, he's really leaving his "I".

Therefore, if a person would know his true identity - if he would come to recognize what his "I" is - he would get a lot less dragged after what society does. The problem is that he lives life superficially, always doing what his surroundings do, without ever having developed his own individuality. He is not in touch with his inner self, with his "I", thus, if he attains self-awareness, he will find that he gets less dragged after what his surroundings do.

Of course, no is clear who he really is, and if anyone thinks he's that clear who he is and that he has attained perfect self-recognition, such as person is a *baal gaavah* (arrogant person), or a he is a complete fool.

But if a person has at least some degree of self-recognition of himself, he has developed his element of earth in the soul for holiness, and such a person will get less dragged after the "earth"- his surroundings. In other words, the more inner that a person becomes, the less he is dragged after superficiality, and the more that a person is "himself", the less he is dragged after things in society which are not "Me."

These are two different ramifications of the concept; one aspect is to become more internal and less superficial, while another aspect in this is for a person to only do actions that are "himself" and avoid actions that are not "himself".

To illustrate, there are people who learn a lot of Torah, but they are learning more than their mental capabilities can handle, like when they learn parts of Torah that that are not meant for them to currently learn. They are learning Torah in a way that has to mimic their surroundings, and they disconnect from their true self in doing so.

Another example is that there are people who do a lot of *chessed*, throwing themselves all day into an endeavor which is really not meant for them to work on, but they do so anyways, because they know that others do it and therefore they feel obliged to do the same.

These two kinds of people are not acting like their true self and are forcing themselves to fit a certain mold that they have cut out for themselves, based on society. But acting like this will cause a person to leave his true self and involve himself with actions that are not meant for him to pursue, on his current level, for he is not yet in touch with his true self, and therefore he is doing things that are above his capacity. He is too dragged after what his surroundings do, and he has no individuality of his own.

The better a person recognizes his "I" and gets in touch more with his true self (and as we mentioned, no one reaches perfect self-awareness, but each person can still reach a degree of self-awareness by trying to recognize what his "I" really is), the more he will be connected to himself, and the less he will be pulled after what his surroundings are doing.

This is the way to fix the nature to get dragged into doing things that the surroundings do.

2. Get To Know Your Self, then Expand Outward

The next scenario we discussed is when a person, after getting dragged after surroundings, is dragged from one thing to the next. This problem stems from **water** (within wind-of-water).

The *Maharal* and others say that the whole concept of *galus*, exile, is really a situation in which a person lacks true self-awareness, and that *geulah* redemption is about revealing one's true self. This concept forms the basis for our entire inner *avodah*: that a person must come to have a deep awareness about himself – he must get in touch with his "I."

People who have a bit of self-recognition – even if it's not complete – are able to avoid getting dragged after surroundings.

There are two stages in all our inner *avodah*. First a person has to reach his "I", and this was what we explained above. After that, however, a person has an *avodah* to be able to leave the "I" - to go above it.

Most people are far from their "I", and they have never reached their true self; they are always doing actions that are not in their league. When a person is still in the first stage of trying to avoid superficiality, he must come to identify his "I", by improving his actions. He must do actions that reflect his true self. That is the first part of one's *avodah*.

After one reaches his "I" and he is used to doing actions that emanate from his own individuality, he must now learn how to transcend his "I". In this way, he uses the power to get 'dragged' for holiness, by 'dragging' himself away from his ego, which will in turn help him avoid getting dragged after society.

The Prerequisite Stage: Nullifying Your Desires To Hashem

However, even before you have reached your "I", your *avodah* begins with trying to overcome the *yetzer hora* (evil inclination), that needs to learn how align his will with Hashem's will. That is the first step of all our *avodah*, and it has to be reached even before a person gets to his "I".

Hiskalelus: Integrating

After a person reaches his "I", now he has an opposite *avodah*: he must do things that are the opposite of "I". The reason for this is because a person has to gain *hiskalelus*, integration, with the collective whole of the Jewish people, and this is our *avodah* of *Ahavas Yisrael*.

Getting Used To Leaving The "I"

A person therefore needs to learn how to connect with other people who are not like him, and with places that are not like him. This must be done sensibly, or else it will be detrimental and ruin a person's individuality.

Most people in the world are involved with actions that aren't really for them to do, and their inner

self is being suffocated by all of this. The true way is for a person to first reach his own individuality and only do things that are meant for his capacity, and only after a person has strengthened his connection to his inner self can he now seek to transcend his inner self and do things that are opposite his personality.

How does a person do things that aren't himself? At first, you need to do things that you don't feel connected to, as a learning process, and it is a kind of *yissurin* (suffering) you need to accept upon yourself. The second thing you need to do is to drag yourself after things that aren't "you", precisely because that is how you can reach the depth of your individuality.

When a person lives his "I" very strongly, he can connect even to things that are not his personality, and thus be able to 'drag' himself even after things that aren't for him. (When this power is misused, it is used for evil, when a person drags himself after sins, *chas v'shalom*). Go after things that aren't "you", precisely because you are trying to expand beyond yourself; or you can do this out of *emunah* that this is what is wanted of you and that you will be able to get there. There are people who use their power of imagination for this, but you need to be careful with how use the imagination.

All of the *tzaddikim* would practice this: they would allow their "I" to escape past itself and learn new things, by doing things that were not like their personality. This is the holy way to get "dragged", and it helps a person avoid getting dragged after surroundings.

This can be done in either one of two ways, as we mentioned: either you should strive to connect yourself to things that aren't "you", or, you can have *emunah* that you need to do things that aren't "you" because you believe that Hashem will lead you to where you need to get to.

3. Controlling The Expansion Beyond The "I"

However, when you are at this later stage of expanding outward past your "I", you must let your soul get dragged after new kinds of people and places to connect to only as long as you can control yourself from getting dragged too much. You need to allow yourself to get "dragged" past your "I" and thus allow yourself to expand outward only for the sake of developing your "I", but if you find that you can't control yourself once you're getting dragged, then it will only be detrimental to allow yourself to connect to things that are opposite to your personality.

Thus, even when you are at the stage of expanding outward beyond your "I", you must control yourself from getting dragged too much beyond your "I", because if you don't, it shows that you aren't in control of your "I" and you're not really coming out of it, which defeats the whole purpose.

4. The New "I"

Finally, the deepest way to avoid getting dragged after surroundings, which is the way to counter fire-based dragging (passionate impulsiveness), is as follows. After you have reached your "I" somewhat, now you have an *avodah* to do things that are against you "I", so that you can overcome your ego and go beyond it.

Therefore, connect yourself to others who are different from you, and feel that this is actually the real "you"!

Until now, the *avodah* was to expand beyond yourself and do things that go against your "I", but you are still feeling that those other things are not "you". However, in the higher part of this stage, which is what are discussing here, you can connect yourself with people who are the opposite of "you" and come to feel that this is precisely where your "I" can be fully reached.

This is really the depth of *ahavas Yisrael* (love for the Jewish people), and it is also the depth of the concept of *hiskalelus*, integrating your private existence with the collective whole of the Jewish people.

(When this power is used for evil, people identify their “I” with things that are really not for them, and sometimes they connect themselves very strongly with even forbidden things and come to feel that this is where their “I” is. For example, there people who are involved in *mosdos* (organizations) and make this endeavor into their entire life, and they and remain like this until they die, when these things are really not meant for them to do!)

Joining Your “I” With The “Collective” Soul

There is a concept called *neshamah hakoleles*, the collective soul of the Jewish people. This is the depth of *Ahavas Yisrael*, in which a person leaves his private existence and identifies another Jew as being himself.

For example, there is kind of collector who goes around collecting money for another Jew he knows, and he asks for the money as if it was for himself, and he sounds just as desperate as if it would be his own situation. This kind of person has reached the level of *hiskalelus* with the *neshamah hakoleles* of the Jewish people, because he feels that his soul is connected to this act of collecting money for another Jew, even though initially he felt that it’s not him; he feels that the other person’s needs is like his own.

Most people act the same way each day, and they aren’t able to connect themselves with two opposing concepts at once. A deeper person, though, can say two opposing views with the same conviction. He can connect to concepts that oppose his nature.

This is the key to the three pillars that are Torah, *Avodah* and *Chessed* – love for Hashem, love for the Torah, and love for Jews. Doing *chessed* is not just an action, and it is not just compassion; it is to feel love in your soul for another Jew by connecting to his needs no less than if he would be yourself, and that is the depth of *ahavas Yisrael*. Feeling other’s pain as your own is just an example of this concept.

First you need to reach your “I” and only do things that are “you”, but after you have reached that and worked on that, you need to then go above your “I” by doing things that oppose your personality. Most people never reach their “I” and are involved with things that are not really meant for them to work on, and their lives are spent in constant *bilbul* (confusion).

Ahavas Yisrael is only reached when you take your “I” and you expand it; when you take the love of yourself and then expand that love to others. It is reached after first loving yourself in a healthy way, when you first reach *echad* (oneness) with yourself because you have developed your “I”, and then after that, you can go above yourself and attach yourself to the collective soul of the Jewish people, which is *ahavas Yisrael*.

This is the holy kind of “dragging”, which is the deepest method mentioned thus far in how to avoid getting dragged after surroundings: by attaching yourself to a higher place that is above your “I” [which is when you attach your private existence to the collective soul of the Jewish people].

The Deepest Method: Connecting To The Ein Sof of Hashem

Now we will mention the last point about this, which is the deepest point of all of this that completes the picture of this discussion. It will not apply to all people, but it is worth mentioning, so that we can know about it and strive for it somewhat.

Hashem is endless, and He breathed His spirit into man - therefore, the light of His "*Ein Sof*" (Infinite Light) is contained in the soul. This is above even the level of *hiskalelus* with the collective soul.

When this power is misunderstood, a person thinks that he is unlimited, like Pharaoh. But if a person connects to the *ohr Ein Sof* in his soul, he reaches an unlimited kind of dragging for holiness, where he is endlessly pulled after more and more holiness.

It is the deepest way of stopping the nature to get dragged after surroundings, and it is the holiest way to use the soul's nature to get "dragged".

We have explained here the ways of how dragging is evil - and how it can be fixed.

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