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When A Person "Dries Up" Inside

The main aspect of the element of earth, as we mentioned in the previous chapters, is that earth is dry. In this chapter, we will learn about what dryness of the soul is – first we will analyze the matter intellectually, and then we will see how it can manifest in our own soul, for good and for evil.

When something is dry, it is missing its life-giving energy. There are levels of to how much something can be missing vitality; when all vitality is missing from something, it can be said of it that its dryness has become total.

We see this concept from the curse placed on Adam. When Adam was cursed with death, he was told *"You are earth, and to earth you shall return."* Death was decreed upon him for eating from the tree, and along with this, he was told that his body would now return to earth, where it would dry up and disintegrate into the earth. At death, there is no vitality present in the body, so the body reaches a total level of its dryness, whereupon it disintegrates into the earth.

However, although dryness is the nature of earth, the total level of dryness is present not in earth, but in fire. This is because although earth is dry, it is also cold at the same time, which gives it some small degree of vitality. *"Cold waters on a famished soul."* The cold can sometimes provide vitality. By contrast, fire is hot and dry; besides for the fact that it contains dryness, the heat of fire adds on its own individual cause for dryness, allowing for the total level of dryness. Thus, fire enables dryness on its ultimate level.

We will need to understand what this is, but this is the general outline: dryness is rooted in earth, but this is not the total level of dryness. The total level of dryness is found in fire. Another way of describing it is that earth is the *driest* of the elements, while fire is the element which *causes* the most dryness.

The Good and Evil Uses of Dryness

How do we see dryness manifest in earth, and how do we see it in fire?

The Jews complained in the desert that they wanted to eat meat, rather than to eat *manna*. They said, *"Our souls are dry"*,^[1] and *Targum Onkelos* translates this to mean, "Our souls are hungry." When dryness becomes dominant in the soul, it causes a person to feel a certain hunger.

When a person is at the abject level of poverty, he is called an *"evyon."* The Sages say that an *evyon*

is someone who is so hungry that he wishes he could eat anything.^[2] This is coming from internal dryness. It does not make someone feel like he's missing vitality in his life, but rather, it makes a person hungry for anything.

Earlier, we said that the definition of dryness of the soul is when a person has lost all his vitality. When a person dries up inside himself and he feels like he has no vitality, he gets hungry for everything that there is. Why? This is because if he would have a bit of vitality left in himself, he would only be hungry for things that he needs, not things which he doesn't need. But when all of his vitality is depleted within him, he will get hungry for anything, even for things he normally doesn't get hungry for.

This is what happens to an *evyon*, a poor person who becomes so poor that he is desperate to eat just about anything. He is desperate to fill himself with some vitality, since he has no vitality inside himself.

Thus, dryness stemming from the element of earth can stir on a person's hunger - the person will yearn for anything that gives him vitality. As we explained, the coldness present in earth is what accompanies the dryness.

By contrast, dryness coming from the element of fire is accompanied by the warmth of fire, and this is a different kind of dryness. It causes a person to despair! The word for despair in Hebrew is *yeiush*, which comes from the word *ayish*, "fire." This hints that fire can dry up a person so much to the point that he totally despairs.

When a person dries up inside himself, this is defined as a lack of vitality in the person. What happens to a person when he feels like he has no inner vitality left in himself? Either one of the following two possibilities will happen.

When a person feels crushed and hopeless, Chazal say, "Even if a sword is on a person's neck, he should not despair from Hashem's mercy." When a person has reached total inner dryness - in other words, when he feels that he is staring death in the face - it is precisely that inner dryness that he feels which can spur him on to yearn for Hashem's mercy. He can become "hungry" for any signs of life that Hashem can grant him. In his moments where he feels like he wants to totally despair, it is precisely *then* that he has the opportunity to appreciate his life.

But, the other possibility is, that the person will totally give up. The person feels the "sword on his neck", so to speak, and he is apt to give up, thinking, "That's it. My life is over. No point in having hope for anything." What he doesn't realize, though, is that his very feeling of despair is what really causes him to give himself over to the reigns of hopelessness.

The concepts of despair (*yeiush*) and inner dryness (*yoivesh*) are polar opposites. When a person has inner dryness, *yoivesh* - stemming from his element of earth - he can be motivated to revitalize himself, because he feels the dryness. But when a person has too much *yeiush*, his inner dryness is coming from his element of fire, and he gets too dried up; the dryness here increases his negativity over his situation.

The letters contained in the word "*yeiush*"\despair are the letters *yud*, *aleph*, and *shin*. These letters can be rearranged to form the words "*Yeish Aleph*" - "There is only One", implying how a person has the ability to nullify himself to the Creator, precisely when he enters into despair. By contrast, the letters contained in the word *yoivesh*\dryness are *yud*, *beis*, and *shin*, which form the words "*Yeish Beis*" - "There is Two", implying how a person feels that he is separate and apart from the Creator; when he does not nullify himself to the Creator through his predicament.

To summarize, the difference between *yeiush*\despair and *yoivesh*\dryness is: *yoivesh*\dryness comes from earth, while *yeiush*\despair comes from fire. How can we see it? Fire can come and dry up water; it essentially takes the vitality out of the water which the water could have provided. When this goes on in the soul, a person despairs. A person in total despair is so negative about his situation that he thinks, "Even if I would somehow gain some vitality in my life, I would dry up." His inner fire is drying up his water, due to the heat present in fire, and causing all the water in his soul to evaporate. This is the despair which can come from one's element of fire. It is when the inner dryness becomes total.

By contrast, dryness stemming from earth comes along with some coldness that is present in earth. The coldness in earth can help the dryness gain some vitality; because we find that coldness can provide vitality: "*Cold waters on a famished soul.*" Even though earth is dry, its coldness can provide some vitality and thus mitigate some of the dryness. It can make a person instead feel like the *evyon*, the pauper who will desperately seek anything to help sustain himself.

Thus, earth can provide a constructive kind of dryness, because it is a kind of dryness that will make a person seek vitality. Fire is the source of dryness that is destructive to the person, because it will make a person dry up too much to the point beyond the normal amount of despair.

Dryness From Earth: A Yearning For Vitality

Both fire and earth are the sources of dryness in the soul, but earth is the main source of dryness that is constructive. By contrast, dryness coming from fire saps a person out of his vitality.

However, even dryness of fire can improve a person, by causing the person to feel totally nullified to the Creator when he feels that he is at the point of despair. As we explained before, this is alluded to in the word *yeiush*, which can read "*Yeish Aleph*" - "There is only One" - which hints to how a person can feel nullified to the Creator as a result of his hopelessness.

Earth, though, causes a different kind of dryness in the soul. It makes a person feel that because he has dried up and he feels despair, he will now seek to revitalize himself.

We see this concept in the physical world, from the idea of a beach. A beach is not part of the ocean, yet although it is not water, it provides vitality to people. It is the beginning of the land, and thus it provides vitality to people. In Hebrew, the beach is called *yabashah*, which is related to the word "*yoivesh*"\dryness. Hashem told the waters to gather together and form the beach. The beach is the beginning of land, the earth, and thus dryness stemming from the element of earth is a vitality-giving kind of dryness.

The ocean is not a place for people to live in, even though water is the source of vitality. We need to live on land; the beach represents the beginning of land, a kind of "earth" which sends us vitality, in spite of its dryness. Thus, dryness coming from our element of earth provides us with vitality. Our element of earth is dry, but it demands to be nourished and watered, so that it will gain vitality.

We can compare this to a person walking through the dry desert, and he has no water to drink. He becomes so thirsty that he will drink up any drop of water he comes across. This is a dryness stemming from the earth in the soul, which demands to be watered and filled. But if a person has given up on getting any water, he falls into total despair, and then his dryness is coming from his element of fire, which dries him up too much. This is when he loses hope that he can be rescued from his situation; when he despairs so much that even if he would get some vitality, his fire would quickly dry it up.

Removing Despair

In order to use the constructive dryness of earth, understandably, we need to remove the despair that is upon us.

When a person despairs, he feels that there is no hope for him to become revived, and that is the reason he despairs. By contrast, the *evyon*\pauper becomes desperate to gain some amount of vitality; he believes that he **can** receive vitality. If a person is simply desperate for help but he has lost all hope for his situation, he falls into the trap of despair. But when a person, because he is so desperate, is able to get himself to throw away the feeling of despair upon him – he is using the constructive power of dryness in his element of earth (by thirsting for hope), and he has the key to receiving a new burst of vitality.

The elements that provide vitality to a person are wind and water. Wind contains moisture and heat, which are both factors that give vitality. Water is the prime source of vitality, providing both moisture and coldness that revitalizes a person. But there is another way how we can gain vitality, and it is by using the earth's dryness: when we demand for ourselves vitality. We can demand vitality either from water or from wind, but on a more subtle note, our very demand for vitality is what provides us with vitality!

This is how we can fix the dryness that comes from our element of fire, which causes us to despair. By using our dryness of earth – by desiring vitality – we are telling ourselves that it is possible for us to receive a new burst of vitality to our situation, and this will counter the fire that is drying us up inside.

We have explained thus far when dryness of the soul is constructive, and when it is detrimental. Now we will see how the elements of water, wind and fire can be used to fix the dryness of the soul [of earth].

The Relationship Between Earth and Water

Now that we have explored the concept, we can understand the following additional point. The first time in the Torah that the word *yoivesh*\dryness is found in the Torah is when Hashem told the waters to gather together and form the *yabashah*, the beach. There is a fascinating point contained in this concept.

Of the four elements, the elements of fire, wind and water were revealed out in the open at the start of Creation. The “spirit”\wind of Hashem hovered over the waters, as the *possuk* states. As for fire, the Torah does not say explicitly about a fire being around at the start of Creation, but the *sefarim hakedoshim* reveal that when Hashem said “Let there be light” on the first day of Creation, there was already an original light that existed before Creation [but it did not shine like the light which Hashem created on the first day]. So the elements of wind, water and fire were revealed at the start of Creation.

But the earth was hidden. Although Hashem first created the sky and the earth, the earth was not yet visible. The world was entirely covered with water. On the second day of Creation, Hashem told the waters to gather together and form the beach, and then the surface of the earth became visible. The earth was around before, of course, just as much as the other elements; but the other three elements were already revealed at their start, whereas earth was hidden from its start, and it only became visible at a later point. Since the earth was originally covered with water, the earth looked like the water.

The earth was not covered by wind or by fire – it was covered by water. Although the wind was hovering above the water, it was not covering the earth, but it was rather floating on top of it. Wind does not conceal things, unless it gathers dust, whereupon the dust will swirl through the air and

cover things. But even then, the wind itself never covers things. Water, however, covered the entire earth at the beginning of Creation. Although water is clear, it still served to be a great covering of the earth. So earth was covered and hidden at the beginning of Creation, by water.

This shows us the following insight. At its original state, when earth was covered by water, the earth was not dry. It was covered by water, which meant that the earth could not be totally dry. Although earth is the root of all dryness, the earth was not dry in its root state of Creation. In the root state of Creation, the driest substance was fire.

The earth contains coldness in it, and this really comes from water, which was originally covering it at the start of Creation. Afterwards Hashem made the waters form the first beach of the earth, but the earth still retained its cold properties from the water that had been covering it. The earth lost its moisture from the water, but the coldness from the water remained in earth; thus, earth is dry and cold.

Now we can understand why earth, although being dry, can still be a source of vitality to a person, in spite of the fact that it is dry. It is because in its original form, it was not dry, due to the water that covered it. [For this reason, the *sefarim hakedoshim* only consider fire, water, and wind to be the elements, and do not consider earth to be a “fourth” element - because at the root state of Creation, earth was integrated with the water].

Vitality From Earth: The Yearning For Vitality

In the Torah, we find two instances in which the waters receded to form land. One place was by the second day of Creation, in which Hashem told the waters to gather together and form the *yabashah*, the beach. We also find that when the sea was split, the floor of the sea became walkable, and it was called *cheravah*, “desolate land.”

When Hashem gathered the waters together and made the beach, He revealed a new kind of vitality. Normally, vitality comes from water, but the beach symbolizes a kind of vitality that can come even when water is dried up. When water is dried up, it is called both *yabashah* and *cheravah*. It is *cheravah*, because it is dry and desolate land. The word *cheravah* is rooted in the word *churban*, destruction, which hints to fire, the force of destruction. But it is also called *yabashah*, beach, which symbolizes a longing for vitality, like the poor person who is desperate for any vitality. This is a different kind of vitality than the regular source for vitality.

Thus, there are two kinds of vitality. One kind of vitality is when a person simply receives vitality, and it is drawn from the element of water in the soul, which is the source of vitality in the soul. But there is another way to gain vitality: when there is a very *longing* for vitality. This is a kind of “vitality” that is contained in our element of earth, because our earth is dry, and it can get so dried up to the point that it becomes desperate to cure its thirst, just as the pauper will take any source of vitality that comes his way.

This shows us that when a person yearns for something - and he believes he can get there, with *emunah* - he can reveal a source of vitality in his element of earth.

Hashem told Adam after the sin, “*Earth you are, and to earth you shall return.*” The curse of death was placed upon mankind as a result of the sin; now a person would die, and his body is returned to the earth, where it decomposes. But in the future, Hashem will revive all the dead. When we believe in the coming of Moshiach and in the future revival of the dead, we reveal vitality from our element of earth, which longs to receive vitality.

The simple understanding of this is that the dead are placed in the ground, and in the future they will

rise from the ground when they are resurrected, so we can see how vitality can come from earth. But the deeper understanding is as follows.

Chazal say that there is a part of the body which does not decompose: the *luz* bone, which does not enjoy any enjoyment from this world; all it enjoys is the *Melave Malka* meal, and therefore it enables the rest of the body to become resurrected. *Motzei Shabbos* is a time in which a person loses his vitality; his soul is in mourning that it has lost its spiritual energy from Shabbos. Through the *Melave Malke* meal on *Motzei Shabbos*, we give our soul vitality, by revealing a yearning for vitality.

The very fact that our soul yearns for its lost vitality is exactly what gives it vitality! This is how we can see vitality being revealed through “earth”\the absence of vitality.

The earth has no vitality. Vitality can be drawn from the other three elements, while the earth itself is devoid of vitality. How, then, does the earth gain vitality? It gets vitality when the soul *longs* for vitality, since it doesn't have vitality of its own.

The destitute person, the *evyon*, has nothing to his name; he is therefore desperate for anything that will enable him to survive. Someone who has the basic necessities but lives with discomfort is called an *oni*, a “poor” person, but he is not as destitute as the *evyon*, who has not a penny to his name. The *oni* is poor enough to receive *tzedakah*, but the *evyon* is in a much direr situation; he's desperate for anything. The only thing keeping him going is his will to live.

This shows us about an amazing power in our soul. When a person feels like he is missing vitality, and he is desperate to get it - he can gain vitality from his very *longing* to have vitality!

Therefore, when dryness of earth gets too dominant in the soul - when a person dries up and feels like he has no vitality - this itself can be his remedy. Since he feels like he has dried up inside, he can use this as an opportunity to long for vitality, and that can provide him with vitality.

Wants Vs. Needs

If the words until now have been understood, we can proceed further in this discussion, with the help of Hashem.

Earlier we mentioned that dryness in the soul brings on a hunger for something, which is called *te'avon*. We also know that “desire” is called *taavah*. What is the difference between desiring something, *taavah*, and thirsting for something, *te'avon*?

To know this, first we need to reflect on where they are rooted in the elements. *Taavah*, desire, is rooted in the element of water, as we brought earlier from the words of Rav Chaim Vital. A *te'avon*, a hunger, is rooted in the element of earth.

When the *b'nei Yisrael* complained of hunger in the desert, they complained, “*Our souls are dry.*” Hashem brought them quail, so they could have meat. The Torah calls this place “*Kivros HaTaavah*”, “the place where desires buried them.” Chazal criticize them for complaining.^[3] Hashem gives us meat so that our hunger can be satisfied^[4], but not for the purpose of increasing *taavah*\desires.

Therefore, it is considered as if their desires buried them. They did not ask for meat out of necessity, but rather out of *taavah* for meat. When they asked for *manna*, however this was a justified request. They needed to eat something, or else they would starve. This was called *te'avon*, hunger, and it was a normal request. But the desire to eat meat was not a need, but rather a want. It was a *taavah*. They could have asked for out of *te'avon*\hunger, but they were asking for it out of *taavah*\desire, and for this, they are criticized by Chazal.

Thus, *taavah*\desire is when a person wants something he doesn't need. *Te'avon*\hunger is when someone seeks something he needs to survive. An *evyon*, a destitute person who has no money, is hungry for anything; his hunger is not coming from unhealthy *taavah*, but from *te'avon*. He seeks survival, and therefore he will pursue anything, but he is not doing so because he seeks indulgence.

However, there does exist a concept of *taavah* when it is used for holiness, and this is rooted in the holiest *taavah* in Creation - Hashem's desire to have a dwelling on this world.^[5] Hashem "desires" to have a dwelling on this world, even though He is perfect and doesn't need to, because there is a concept of holy *taavah*. Hashem also "desires" the prayers of the righteous, even though He lacks for nothing. There is such a concept of holy *taavah*, but normally, a person has to be happy with what he has, as Chazal say, "Who is wealthy? The one who rejoices in his lot."

By contrast, there is a different power in the soul, *te'avon*, which is a yearning to complete what one lacks. It comes from the dry nature of our element of earth, which seeks something whenever it feels lacking, and not because it has a desire for something unnecessary.

So there are two kinds of "wants" that we have. Sometimes we want to add onto ourselves, and this is called *taavah*. [It can be used for good or bad]. Or, we want something because we are truly lacking something, and we wish to complete our lacking.

Hunger is called *te'avon*, which connotes a desire, as in the possuk, "*And if the woman does not desire to follow after you*". Why does a person hunger for something and want something? The word for desire, *ratzon*, comes from the word *ratz*, "to run", which comes from the word *aretz*, earth. Thus, hunger is rooted in earth, because hunger is a *ratzon*, and *aretz*\earth is the root of *ratz**ratzon*\desire. When a person is simply lacking a little bit and he wants to complete what he lacks, this is not a hunger, but rather a desire for additional luxuries. But when a person is completely lacking and he desires to fill his lacking situation, this is *te'avon*\hunger, a *ratzon* that is rooted in the element of earth.

When *ratzon* stems from earth, it comes from the dryness of earth. From a simple understanding, dryness is a lack of vitality, but according to what we have explained here at length, the dryness in the element of earth can actually become a new source of vitality in the person. Just as heat in fire, the moisture in wind and the coldness in water can give vitality, so can we utilize the dryness of earth to give vitality!

This is the meaning of what is written, "*Everything is from earth, and everything will return to earth.*" Creation receives its vitality from the very fact that it has nothing of its own and that it depends on Hashem for survival - it gets vitality from this very yearning.

How Longing Can Give Life

We can now add on another point.

As we said, the element of earth demands vitality, since it naturally lacks vitality. The simple understanding of this concept is that earth can only get vitality from the other three elements, as we explained.

But according to what we have now explained, earth can get vitality from itself! The fact that earth longs for vitality is what can give it vitality. We can see this apparent from those who lose their sense of yearning; they despair. This shows us that if a person holds onto his longing for vitality and he doesn't despair, he gains vitality - from his very longing for vitality.

One of our 13 Principles of Faith is, "I believe, with perfect faith, in the coming of Moshiach, and even

though he tarries, even so, I await him.” Normally, a person loses patience when he waits a long time for something to happen and it doesn’t happen, and he gives up. But our belief in Moshiach teaches us that our very wait for him is what gives us vitality – “Even though he tarries, even so, I await him.” The very awaiting for his arrival is what gives us vitality.

In the future, the element of earth will be rectified and completed through the other three elements. In our current time, though, how are we able to get vitality from the element of earth? How does the impoverished *evyon* survive when he isn’t being supported by anyone? He can derive vitality from his very longing to live.

This is describing the deep concept that everything can be rectified from within itself, not just from outside itself. Earth can be rectified through the outside, which is to use the elements of water, wind and earth – or it can be rectified using the earth itself: when one has a longing to receive vitality, [and in turn, he gains vitality from this].

For this very reason, the more a person descends into his element of earth, the closer he is to rectifying himself through his element of earth, because he longs more for vitality. It is the deep concept that a problem itself can be turned into the remedy.

It would seem that the ruination of something (*kilkul*) can only be rectified through *tikkun*, rectification. But sometimes, a *tikkun* can be achieved through the very *kilkul*, and the *kilkul* itself can become a *tikkun*! To illustrate, “Hashem creates worlds and destroys them.”^[6] It seems simply that Hashem destroys His previous creations and then He creates new ones in its place, but the deep understanding is that the very destruction is part of the renewal process.

The word *churban*\destruction is related to the word *chibbur*\connection, because destruction can be a catalyst for rebuilding.

Similarly, Chazal state that Moshiach is born on the day that the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed; in other words, when there is destruction, a new path that will be better than before is paved. It is not a coincidence that Moshiach is born on the day of the destruction. It is because the destruction itself gives birth to Moshiach. “We await for him, although he tarries” – how are we able to await Moshiach even though he tarries? It is because there was a destruction. Destruction took away our source of life; our entire vitality came from the Beis HaMikdash. When it was destroyed, from where are we to derive vitality from? From our very longing that it be rebuilt. Thus, the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash is really a new source of vitality.

Here we come to a deep concept: how death itself can really be life to us. Death is not just an end to life, and the resurrection of the dead will not be the only renewal of life that exists. Death can be a source of vitality for a person, because the more we endure destruction, the more we long for life.

Two Ways of Recovering From Our Spiritual Falls

Herein lays a deep fundamental about our soul, and it is relevant to all of the failures that all of us go through in life.

There is no person who does not fail. How do we react to our failures? One kind of person will fall into despair, while another kind of person manages to stay positive, believing that better days will come. But the true, deeper reaction is that a person can really derive vitality from his very longing to come out of his situation. A person who feels vitality from his longing is someone that is always spiritually alive. We will explain.

Hashem created man from the earth and breathed into man a soul of life. Our simple understanding is

that our “soul of life”, our *neshamah*, is what provides us with life, and that the earth we come from is associated with death, not life. This is true, but according to what we said above, we really have two sources of vitality. Our basic source of vitality is our soul, and in particular, our vitality comes from the element of wind in the soul, because it was a wind that was breathed into us by Hashem. However, another source of vitality is our element of earth. Although the body returns to the earth after death, the earth which facilitates death can also facilitate life. The Sages said that when a righteous person dies, another righteous person is already in place to take him over.^[7] The meaning of this is not just because the chain always continues, although that is also true. It is because when there is death, a new source of life is around the corner. Death can also be a source of vitality, it is just not so obvious.

The cemetery is called the *beis hachaim*, which alludes to this concept, that death is a source of vitality – it reminds us how much we long for life.

The Hidden Source of Vitality

We can now understand more deeply about what we began to discuss in the beginning of this chapter, that the constructive element of dryness is mainly found in earth, while total dryness is found in the element of fire. It is difficult to understand: If dryness in the soul is constructive when it comes from the element of earth, how can total dryness be found in fire?

But according to what we have explained, just as the beach gives a possibility for life, whereas the sea doesn't allow for civilization, we can understand that the very dryness of the beach, which comes from earth, creates a source of life.

It seems that water provides sustenance, and not the dry beach. But if you think about it deeply, which of them enables people a place to live in – the beach, or the ocean? It is the beach which enables people to live on the land. Thus, the beach, the *yabashah*, from the word *yoivesh*\dryness, is what enables us to exist.

Since the beach is a life-providing source, the beach is not merely a place in which the water of the ocean recedes, which implies that it lacks vitality. Rather, it reflects how “Hashem destroys worlds and creates them” – destruction enables creation. If Hashem would have created us just as a soul, all of our vitality would come from our soul, and our dryness would not be a source of life to us. But we are currently in a world in which destruction must precede renewal, therefore, our main vitality is actually derived from our body\dryness, and not from our soul.

Our souls, when they are in Gan Eden, derive their vitality from the Source of Life, Hashem. When our soul is inside our body on this world, it gets its vitality from its longing to live. “Hashem desired a dwelling below”, thus, our soul is down below on this earth, not above in Heaven. It is mainly This World where Hashem finds His dwelling, so to speak.

Thus, dryness is a new source of vitality that we can discover. Someone who is dry sounds like someone who has no vitality, but from the perspective of the Torah, as we have seen, dryness can be a source of vitality.

This new source of vitality, dryness, is the secret of the entire Creation; it is not just another detail. All of Creation was created from the earth, and all will return to the earth. The purpose of Creation is not that we will become divested of our body and only have a soul. The purpose of Creation, according to the Ramban, is the resurrection of the dead – where we will be a soul inside a body, and not a soul without a body. (The Ramban, however, differs with this view).

Why? It is because the deeper meaning of the purpose of Creation is that we are meant to connect the two sources of vitality together. Our purpose is not just to reveal the vitality of our soul as it is in

our body, although that is also true. The deeper purpose is that our vitality comes from revealing the two sources of vitality.

The word *Beraishis* can also be read as "*Beis Reishis*", that there are "two beginnings". For our purposes, this means that that we have two beginning points where we can derive vitality from: our spiritual soul, as well as from our lowest element.

Torah and Tefillah

In other language, the Torah is a Heavenly sustenance that comes down to us from Above, while *Tefillah*\prayer comes from down below and gets sent above. We *daven* when we yearn for something, and this represents the kind of vitality that comes from our element of earth. The Torah is the source of vitality that comes from Heaven.

When one davens to Hashem, let's say he is davening for livelihood, is he getting vitality from just the livelihood? No! He is getting vitality from the very act of prayer! *Tefillah* itself is a life-giving source. The *Kuzari* states that we gain energy from each of the three *tefillos* throughout the day. We live from *tefillah* to *tefillah*.

Thus, we have two deep sources of vitality in us – our Torah learning, and our *Tefillos*. These words need to become deeply absorbed in us, very clearly.

Vitality Amidst Failure

The depth that lays behind these words is that there really is no such thing as total "death" in Creation. We think simply that there is death, and that one day there will be a resurrection of the dead. That is true, but on a deep understanding, death is never total. A person who lives with this deep understanding is always alive. When he is spiritually elevated, he is very alive, connected with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. But even as he's amidst a failure, he can still feel vitality from his longing to have vitality. In this way, a person always has vitality, and it is just that there are different colors to vitality; and sometimes, he can experience even both kinds at once.

One who doesn't know of despair can either get his vitality from his connection to the Creator, and if he is going through failure, he can still get vitality from longing to be close to Hashem. There can always be vitality.

There is only thing that can remove one's vitality: despair. When a person despairs, the dryness and the heat of his element of fire remove all his vitality.

These words are very important, because our entire life is based on "*A righteous person falls seven times and rises*" – we go through many ups and downs, and we must know the proper way to go about them, both the ups and the downs.

Thus, dryness of the soul can really be an amazing source of vitality, for one who knows how to derive vitality from a situation in which he feels spiritually dry.

The depth behind this is because when Hashem first created the earth, He created it with water already covering the earth. Thus, earth can always find a connection to water. When one understands this deeply and how it applies to his own soul, he will always be able to uncover water\vitality even in his situation of earth\dryness, and in this way, he can draw forth vitality wherever he is, because he always carries with him some "water".

[1] Bamidbar 11:6

[2] Rashi to Devarim 15:4

[3] Yoma 75a

[4] Chullin 84a

[5] Tanchuma, Bechukosai 3

[6] Koheles 3:11

[7] Yoma 33b

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/understanding-your-middos-11-internal-dryness>